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INTRODUCTIONS

PAINTERS SCULPTORS
AND GRAPHIC ARTISTS

BY
MARTIN BIRNBAUM



*To Philip S. Dean from
his friend Martin Birnbaum*



NEW YORK
FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN
MCMXIX

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TO
MY FRIEND
ANNIE BERTRAM WEBB

1897

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INTRODUCTIONS
PAINTERS SCULPTORS
AND GRAPHIC ARTISTS

AUBREY VINCENT BEARDSLEY



THE main facts of Beardsley's outwardly uneventful life can be given in a few words. He was born at Brighton on August 21, 1872, three days before the birth of that other inimitable artist, Max Beerbohm.

We have no particularly interesting facts about his parents or ancestry, but all his critics mention his surviving sister Mabel, the English actress, who was a sympathetic helpful comrade. When he was still a child, symptoms of tuberculosis, and a genius which overflowed into many fields of artistic endeavor, appeared simultaneously. In 1883 he was giving concerts with his sister in London. Shortly afterwards we hear of him reading omnivorously, starting a history of the Armada, making clever caricatures of his masters at Brighton Grammar School, taking part in theatricals, drawing his first published sketches, and writing a farce which enjoyed the serious critical attention of the town where it was performed. He left school in 1888 and worked successively in an architect's studio and an insurance office. Although many pic-

tures of an earlier date exist, his career as a professional graphic artist may be said to have begun in 1893, with the publication of Sir Thomas Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur," by J. M. Dent & Company. In April of that year Joseph Pennell, the well-known American etcher, introduced the new illustrator in the first number of "The Studio." From that time forward the story of his life is an inspiring but painful journal of a dying genius, working feverishly and searching in vain for a climate which would give him the strength necessary to complete his work. He died at Mentone on March 16, 1898, in the twenty-sixth year of his life, after having been received into the Catholic Church.

Beardsley was the most eminent of a group of men who died while still young, but who lived long enough to accomplish something original and important in art or literature. They were all constantly associated with one another in their lives and work. Here we need only mention Ernest Dowson, for whose precious volumes of verse Beardsley made some of his happiest decorations; Charles Conder, the English Watteau, a romantic painter whose fans and paintings on silk are among the most exquisite works of art ever produced by an Englishman; Lionel Johnson, a genuine poet and an important figure in the Celtic movement, of which William Butler Yeats is now the acknowledged leader; Leonard Smithers, their irresponsible publisher; and our



KLAFSKY AS ISOLDE
Drawing by Aubrey Beardsley
Collection of A. E. Gallatin, Esq.

own Josiah Flynt, or "Cigarette," as the tramps called him, who met the Englishmen before he too "passed on for keeps," in a little back room in the Crown Tavern, near Leicester Square, — "a back parlor pushed up against a bar." The grim, tragic pathos of madness, drink, and disease attaches to their names. Of them all, one alone died with a jest on his lips, and Oscar Wilde's tragic career overshadows the whole period. Fortunately, we still have Arthur Symonds, whose appreciations will always remain the starting-point for future studies of their lives and achievements; William Rothenstein, the distinguished painter, who began his career by making a famous series of contemporary portraits in lithography, and "Max," the incomparable caricaturist and essayist, who will remain forever young and a dandy.

It was Beardsley's ambition to be grouped with these men, not only as an artist, but as a writer, and in a measure he succeeded. To be sure, his literary efforts, consisting of a few poems and a fantastic fragmentary rococo romance, fill only one slender volume, but "Under the Hill," which is a travesty of the Tannhäuser legend, has an unique flavor. The hand of an amateur is easily detected and the work is obviously influenced by the eighteenth-century Frenchmen, but you feel, as in the case of Whistler, that the writer was prodigiously talented and that he was on the threshold of complete mastery. His verses are highly polished and his prose is strange, exotic,

and artificial. Its bizarre music captivates the ear, and it may be said to appeal even to the eye, in somewhat the same way as his designs. It is the work of a sick prodigy who has intuitively absorbed all the secrets of French eroticism and is laughing at the shock he will give John Bull. He adored the art and literature of France, and his intimate knowledge of French belles-lettres amazed all his friends. Balzac was a great passion with him, and the works of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Gautier and Flaubert, were his inspirations. In the interesting introduction to the French edition of "Under the Hill," Jacques Blanche, who painted his portrait, comments on Beardsley's extraordinary familiarity with the literature of France, and adds, "Ai-je jamais entendu un de mes compatriotes parler de Molière et de Racine comme lui? Racine surtout, qui reste fermé à la plupart, il le savait par cœur, et il récitait les chœurs d'Athalie et d'Esther comme des prières." Beardsley's romance, however, does not affect the spirit of the great dramatists. Its extravagant baroque atmosphere and the strange pageant of its characters can best be suggested by using Beardsley's own grotesque vocabulary: "Slim children in masque and domino, smiling horribly; exquisite lechers leaning over the shoulders of smooth doll-like ladies, and doing nothing particular; terrible little pierrots posing as mulierasts, or pointing at something outside the picture; and unearthly fops and strange women mingling in some rococo room lighted mysteriously by the

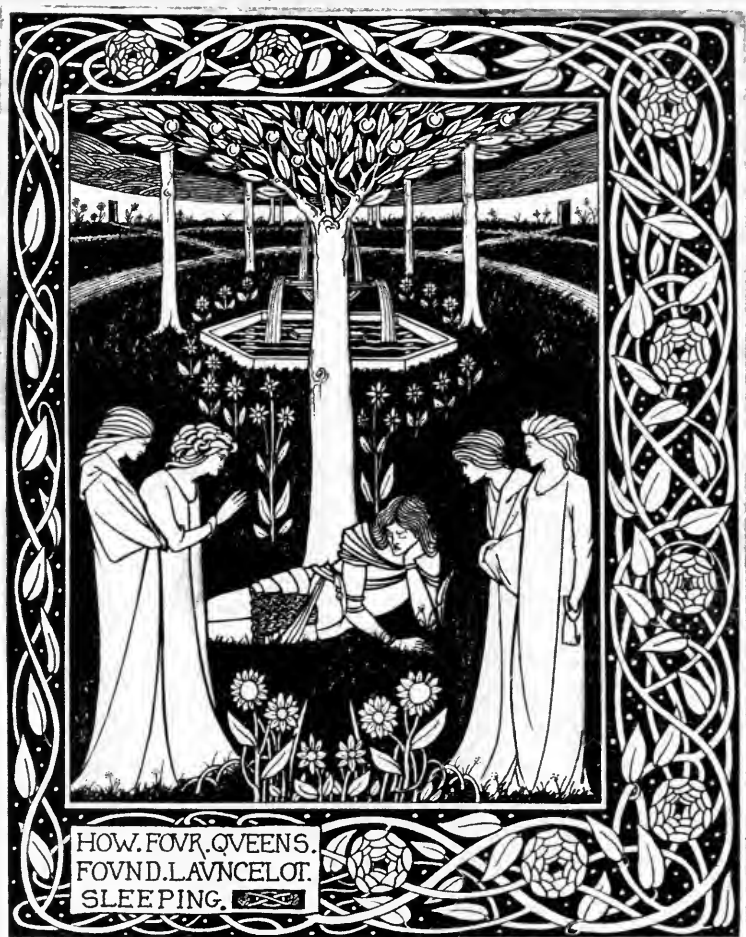
flicker of a dying fire that throws huge shadows upon wall and ceiling.”

Even this short quotation is enough to show that there is the same kind of fault and excellence in his designs and writings, and we are not surprised to learn that he enjoyed playing the piano with a human skeleton posed and balanced on the music stool beside him, as though the rattling bones were joining him in some forbidding duet. One can best describe such genius as *maladif*. He cultivated a magical technique which could convert the most repulsive ugliness into a strange, fascinating beauty. Although he was essentially a great satirist, the common youthful error of starting out by scandalizing his native land tempted him to commit many extravagances. It is, however, not our province to find fault with him for having chosen, to a large extent, unsavory and unwholesome material instead of subjects which breathe the May-time fragrance associated with Anglo-Saxon art.

His designs fall naturally into certain groups. Disregarding his first efforts as an amateur, the first period extends to the year 1893, when “Le Morte d’Arthur” and three volumes of “Bons Mots” by English wits appeared, and the editor of “The Pall Mall Budget” commissioned him to draw illustrations of contemporary interest for that magazine.¹ He had already been en-

¹ An interesting group of these early works which once belonged to Frederick H. Evans, the London book-dealer and photographer, were sold at auction in New York City, during the Spring of 1919.

couraged by Puvis de Chavannes and Burne-Jones, and the uncommonly appropriate drawings for Malory's romance were strongly influenced by the work of the famous Preraphaelite. The "Bons Mots" drawings bear a superficial resemblance to second-rate Japanese prints. The following year the drawings to "Salome" appeared, and a few discerning critics realized that Beardsley had become a master of decorative graphic art. To quote from the excellent monograph by Robert Ross: "Before commencing 'Salome' two events contributed to give Beardsley a fresh impetus and stimulate his method of expression: a series of visits to the collection of Greek vases in the British Museum (prompted by an essay of Mr. D. S. McColl) and to the famous Peacock Room of Mr. Whistler in Prince's Gate — one the antithesis of Japan, the other of Burne-Jones." No designs like them had ever been seen before, and the irritated critics, mystified by genius, ignored his marvelous precise lines and decorative qualities, seized upon anatomical weaknesses in his drawing and certain obviously perverse features, and condemned him as the exponent of decadence. The attacks grew more virulent when the first volume of "The Yellow Book" appeared in April 1894. Beardsley had already done other work — chiefly the ingenious title-pages and frontispieces for the "Keynote" series — for John Lane, who shares the credit of having discovered and encouraged him. "The Yellow Book" became the recognized vehicle for publishing the work of



LANCELOT AND THE FOUR QUEENS
- Drawing by Aubrey Beardsley

Beardsley, its art editor. In its first volumes were disclosed many new phases of his powers, his devilish wit, his peculiar insidious grip and satirical sting. The fury of the affronted art critics was followed by the rupture with John Lane, which resulted in the publication by Leonard Smithers, in 1896, of "The Savoy," under Arthur Symons's literary editorship. In the same year, Smithers brought out what are considered by many admirers Beardsley's masterpieces, — the exquisite embroideries for Pope's "Rape of the Lock," which convinced Whistler that the young man was "a very great artist," and the extraordinary drawings, without backgrounds, for the "Lysistrata" of Aristophanes. In 1897, besides executing book-plates, miscellaneous drawings, and cover designs, — notably the superb "Ali Baba," and the lovely lines which adorn Dowson's verses, — he illustrated the last-mentioned poet's charming pastoral, "The Pierrot of the Minute." In the year of his death there appeared a portfolio of reproductions of his curious illustrations for "Mademoiselle de Maupin," and some beautiful lead-pencil designs and initials for Ben Jonson's "Volpone," which constitute his last works. These showed unmistakable signs of possible further development, concerning which, however, it would be idle to speculate. In examining these works one is immediately impressed by the great variety of obvious influences which dominated him. Whistler, Ricketts, Mantegna, Botticelli, Eisen, Walter Crane, the Japanese, and the Sil-

houettists, may be mentioned at random. No other artist of the first order was ever so receptive, and none ever attached himself to a particular tradition for a shorter time. He had hardly succumbed to some new influence before it became in its turn a mere passing phase of his development. You are constantly amazed by the variety of methods used by him during the same period, and by the range of his literary sympathies. He drew his inspiration from the most varied sources,—Pope, Ben Jonson, and Edgar Allan Poe, Juvenal, Lucian, and Aristophanes, Gautier, Dumas, de Laclos, and Balzac, Wagner and Chopin. Now and then he introduced portraits or caricatures of friends and acquaintances into his drawings. Wilde and Henry Harland are seen in the frontispiece to John Davidson's "Plays"; the Latin quarter Pierrot holding the hour-glass in Dowson's pastoral phantasy, is Charles Conder; Max Beerbohm and Whistler appear in the "Bons Mots" grotesques; Réjane's mask was used by him again and again. How he would have reveled in the sinuous grace and Egyptian attitudes of Ida Rubinstein, the young Russian dancer who inspired D'Annunzio's "Saint Sebastien"!

In spite, however, of Beardsley's faculty for assimilation, and the fact that he was flattered and annoyed by a legion of imitators and forgers, his work can rarely, if ever, be mistaken, unless he himself chooses mischievously to deceive you. Degas, in an unpublished fragment by Oscar Wilde, is quoted as having said: "Il y

a quelque chose plus terrible encore que le bourgeois, — c'est l'homme qui nous singe." No man ever suffered more at the hands of these apes than Beardsley, but he remained inimitable, and the vast quantities of forgeries can fool no one. His artistic accent, so to speak, is unmistakably French, but it is an error to compare his work, except from the moral point of view, with that of men like Félicien Rops or Toulouse-Lautrec. Occasionally these men evoke similar emotions, but their methods are quite different.

Knowing that he had only a few years of work before him, Beardsley was feverishly, incessantly working, and produced many hundreds of drawings in rapid succession. He was socially active, too, however, and loved fine clothes and rare clarets. He seemed determined to live his short life gaily, and always had time for his friends, because he worked chiefly at night, by the light of those long candles which he repeatedly introduced into his fantastic designs. His life, as revealed by his associates and by the strange, inconsequential letters which have been published, reads, indeed, like a morbid psychological novel by Arthur Schnitzler. The coterie of people who visited him in the somber Cambridge street studio, furnished in black, and those who surrounded him at Dieppe, have only the kindest things to say about his engaging, persuasive personality and charming presence, and they maintain that his pose served merely to hide the deep and finely serious feelings of a shy, earnest

man. Among these people, besides the English "Savoy" contributors, were the genial northerner, Fritz Thaulow, with his blonde family, and Jacques Blanche, who has written interesting reminiscences of the whole colony. Some friends, on the other hand, have said that Beardsley craved for the sensational celebrity of a professional beauty. To achieve such notoriety he was guilty of impudent conceits, artistic indiscretions, and anachronisms, like putting Manon Lescaut and Marquis de Sade on Salome's book-shelf. At any rate, whether these statements are correct or not, he certainly enjoyed a reputation wider than he could have expected. He became the storm-center of art criticism, and his detractors saw impropriety lurking in every stroke of his pen. This adverse criticism seemed only to arouse his morbid gaiety, and he became more and more ingeniously unpleasant. When his editor was forced to bowdlerize a drawing, Beardsley sent proofs of it to friends and wrote on the margin:

"Because one figure was undressed,
This little drawing was suppressed.
It was unkind,
But never mind —
Perhaps it all was for the best."

Unfortunately, he regretted these boyish pranks when it was too late, and what may perhaps rank technically as the culminating-point of his genius can never be publicly shown. He realized this, and referred to the drawings in the last letter

to his publisher, Leonard Smithers. This is said to have been written at the Hôtel Cosmopolitain on March 7, 1898, and is the most painfully serious and pathetic commentary we know of, on the danger of being a youthful tragic-comedian.

• MENTONE.

Jesus is our Lord and Judge.

DEAR FRIEND:

I implore you to destroy *all* copies of “*Lysistrata*” and bad drawings. Show this to Pollitt and conjure him to do same. By all that is holy, — *all* obscene drawings.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

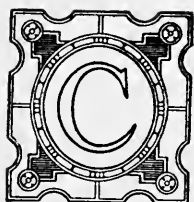
In my death agony.

The volume from which this is taken is one of the artistic publications of Hans von Weber of Munich. It consists of a collection of letters to Smithers, well translated into German by their owner, Fritz Waerndorfer of Vienna, who has one of the best existing collections of original Beardsleys. It must not be confused with the English letters published by Longmans, Green & Co. At the end of the book there are a few notes which throw a valuable light on some of the sources of Beardsley’s inspiration and the way in which he worked. It was edited by Dr. Franz Blei, who introduced Beardsley to Germany and Austria, where his works are now eagerly sought for by the greatest museums. Berlin has acquired his portrait of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and Vienna owns the drawing for “*Lucian*” entitled

“The Vintage.” The marvelous frontispiece to the *Morte d'Arthur* is owned by Herbert von Garvens of Hannover. His influence is gratefully acknowledged by such prominent continental artists as Kay Nielsen, Th. Th. Heine, Franz von Bayros, Alastair, the astoundingly clever Marcus Behmer, and any number of lesser men.

The fact that his work retains its stimulus for a new artistic generation was the excuse for his first comprehensive exhibit on in America, arranged in 1911, when Beardsley had ceased to be a fashionable craze or a topic for frivolous conversation. He was not an artist whom one could lightly denounce or indiscriminately praise, but an acknowledged master of satire and decorative line, who taught graphic artists many new and important lessons, and practically exhausted the resources of his medium. He was an artists' artist, and, as Mr. Pennell wrote, “What more could he wish?” Certain features of his work may be condemned or deplored, but he certainly cannot be ignored by any serious student, and we in America owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who made it possible to give this exhibition, and to William Rothenstein who brought the greater part of the collection from England.

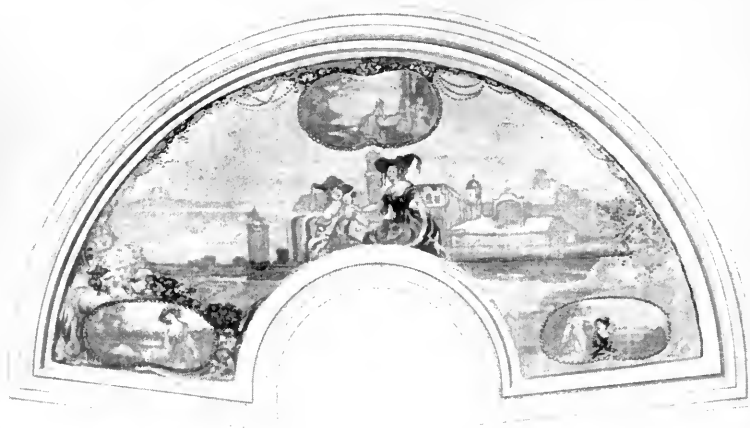
CHARLES CONDER



CHARLES CONDER, one of England's rarest exotic types, was born in London in May, 1868. It is interesting to note that his father, James Conder, a civil engineer, was a descendant of the sculptor Roubiliac. Conder's early years were spent in India and Australia, and it will always be difficult to understand how his tastes and sense of color could have been nurtured by, or have survived, a training for the Government Survey Department. His purely artistic activity was very brief, for it was not until 1890, when he went to Paris, that he determined to devote himself entirely to painting. There, shortly after beginning his studies, he met William Rothenstein, and they shared a studio in the rue Ravignan, went to Julian's, and eventually exhibited together. As an Associate of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts, Conder soon established a high reputation among a limited circle of connoisseurs, and his work was bought by the Musée du Luxembourg. After his death, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Melbourne National Gallery and the British Museum pur-

chased his pictures. When Conder went back to England he became connected with the group of young men who contributed to "The Yellow Book," "The Pageant," "The Savoy," "The Venture," and other short-lived magazines. He exhibited with the New English Art Club and later with the International Society until his death on February 9, 1909, after a painful, lingering illness from which he had been suffering for many years.

The date of his death will come as a surprise to many, for Conder, especially in America, where his pictures are rarely seen, is already a kind of choice tradition. The mingled spirit of happy, careless indolence and gentle melancholy, which pervades his beautiful works, is a reflection of the career of the man. In his healthy periods, he seems to have been a delightful host, a perfect friend, a charming, nonchalant bohemian, who should have lived in splendor in the golden age of Venice. His little ivy-covered house at 91 Cheyne Walk had been the home of the Adams brothers, famous decorators of whose occupancy many traces remained, and it was filled by Conder with *objets d'art*, bibelots, and rare *meubles*, all possessing unique association interest. They lent a pathetic atmosphere to the house on Elizabeth Street which was occupied by his widow until her tragic death in 1912. The attractive young couple had attempted to convert Chelsea into a gay Parisian Montmartre, and their residence became the scene of brilliant masquer-



SILK FANS
By Charles Conder

ades and *fêtes champêtres* at which all the young artists, litterateurs, and musicians of London were gathered together. None of the participants will ever forget Conder's presentation of Beardsley's "Rape of the Lock," or another festival which was like a transcription from eighteenth-century life. Fortunately, Jacques Blanche, the French painter, who seems to be as skilful with his pen as with his brush, was often among those present, and he has written an intimate appreciation¹ of the life and work of his dead friend, which is like a prose threnody.

Unlike Beardsley, who worked for the most part in only one medium, Conder experimented with almost everything: oil-paintings, pastels, sanguines, water-colors, pen-and-ink drawings, etchings, and lithographs. He made illustrations for fairy-tales and for books by Balzac, Gautier, and Ernest Dowson, decorated entire suites of rooms for Mrs. Halford and Edmund Davis, and painted a considerable number of silk fans, many of which are masterpieces. Only on rare occasions, however, did Conder push his work to actual completion, for he did not possess the infinite patience of many lesser men. He was always planning new compositions, and intensely eager to project the refreshing, spontaneous, intangible beauty of his first inspirations into his pictures. Wherever he went, he carried bolts of fine silk on which he was ever ready to experiment and note some fleeting variation of light. Madame

¹ "Verse et Prose." Tome XVIII. Juillet, 1909.

Baudy, whom many artists will recall as the mistress of the old country inn at Giverny, is the proud possessor of one of these choice improvisations, a gift from the grateful young painter into whose work no base or mercenary thought, no feeling of constraint or compulsion ever entered. He was never banal or pedantic. The slightest drawings are always informed by beautiful ideas, and convince you that the artist enjoyed making them. Often, we are told, he would rush from his dining-room to the upper story where he painted, leaving his food, his brilliant friends, and their witty anecdotes to put some touches to a new design. It is to be expected that work produced in such a way is very uneven, but the best of it possesses such rare merits that one is carried away by an enthusiasm aroused by very few of his contemporaries.

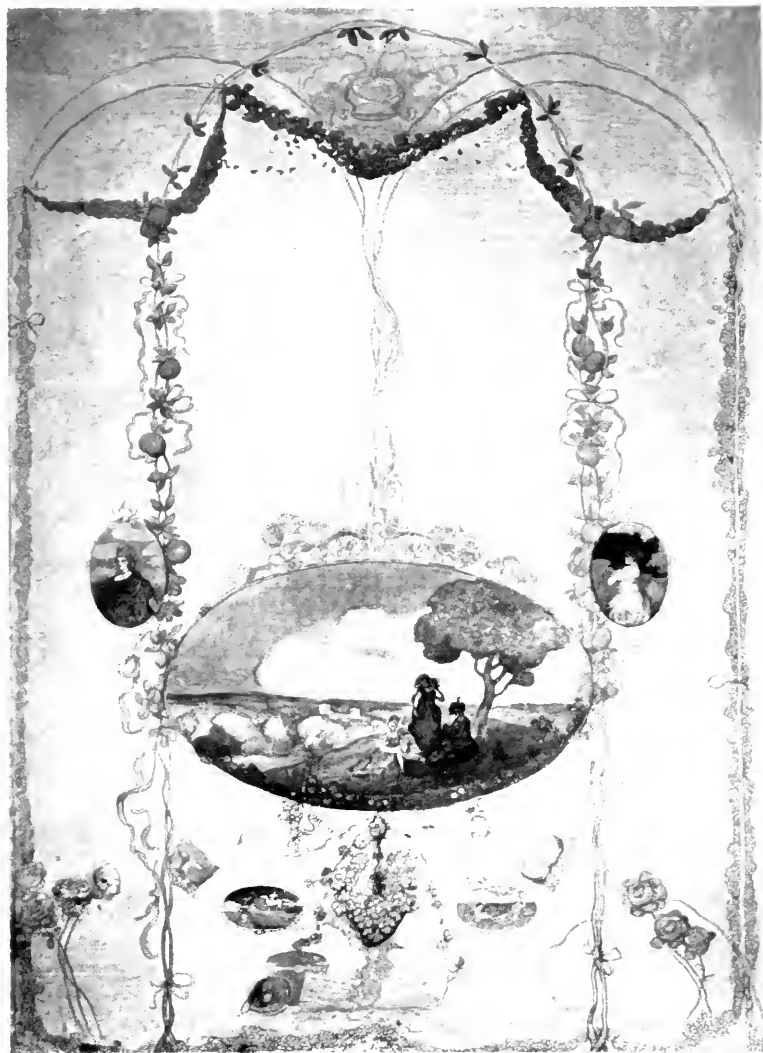
Conder's paintings are like lyrical poems or inspired melodies. He never suffered from the modern disease of realism, and the creatures of his delicate fancy move about in an engaging world of heroic landscapes and enchanted gardens. The pictures are arabesques of sumptuous imaginary women basking in their own glorious beauty. Nymphs throw back their heads in ecstacy and recline in cool dew-drenched arbors of silvery green foliage, or wander thinly clad on the shore of a serene sapphire sea. Through a golden haze they are seen flaunting themselves and laughing roguishly in Elysian groves. Sitting among ruined columns under azure skies, they

listen to playing fountains or to the seductive strains of music wafted by perfumed breezes. Vain sultanas are starting on adventures which will end in tumultuous passionate scenes. While bluebirds fly above their heads, sweet shepherdesses and Grub Street aesthetes dance to gentle measures struck by unseen musicians in eighteenth-century ball-rooms, gay with festoons and ribbons. Spanish beauties watch their toreadors go carelessly to their doom. English Columbines in patches and powder prepare for the Mardi gras, while gallant Harlequins throw them into delicious frenzies by whispering piquant stories into their pretty ears. Occasionally they amuse themselves and discuss life's adornments under the gaslight of a Parisian café. Imperious, petulant, radiant, or disdainful, their beauty is always irresistible, stirs the emotions and transports you into a land of dreams. Whenever he attempted reality, as in his portrait of Max Beerbohm, he was not altogether successful.

Conder persistently styled himself "L'élève d'Anquetin," but his poetical fancy was a gift of the gods, and was never acquired by associating with an artist who was one of the mild sensations of his day. He owed far more to the eighteenth-century Frenchmen, and his fantasies immediately suggest a comparison with Watteau. But here again the likeness is more apparent than real, for there exists a certain affinity between all painters of moods and caprices: Tiepolo, Monticelli, Fantin-Latour, Gaston La Touche, and

Whistler. The last-mentioned was one of Conder's household gods, and a characteristic story is told of one of their meetings. Seeing him on the Boulevard one afternoon, Conder caught up with Whistler and bowed, but received only a blank stare in return. "I am afraid you don't remember me, Mr. Whistler," the young man remarked modestly, "my name is Conder." "Conder?" the butterfly whispered, apparently to himself, "Conder?" . . . Then loudly, "Oh yes! Of course! Conder! — Good-bye, Conder!" and strolled negligently away. The eccentric American, however, remained a very real influence even after this insult.

A more subtle resemblance can be traced between Conder and the great Spaniard Goya. This is especially striking when we study Conder's extraordinary lithographs, which are the delight of discerning collectors, like John Quinn. The Englishman was never brutal, profound, overpowering or grotesque, and the two men are not of the same stature, but they worked with the same noble fury and invested everything they did, however trifling, with a romantic allure. Their women have the same tragic shadows, the same kind of vitality, nervous impetuosity and glow, and often there are similarities of composition and curious deficiencies in drawing. Conder has, however, one gift which distinguishes him from all other painters. His palette was composed of the most delicate colors imaginable. Such transitions of tender rose and vaporous blue,



DECORATIVE PANEL ON SILK
By Charles Conder
Collection of Mrs. Francis P. Garvan

and passages of yellow, lilac, and green are only to be met with in a collection of gems. In spite of his extreme delicacy, however, he is time after time successful in interpreting the varying atmospheric effects of twilight and evening. The evanescent gradations of color flush the delicate white silk like the gleam on moving tropical waters, or Nature's iridescent painting on the wings of morphos, or the scales of paradise fish, and as long as his silk fans endure, Conder's fame will surely last. That is the only excuse for putting them in frames under glass, for their proper destination is clearly the hand of some fair lady promenading in the formal gardens of Versailles. Only then would their great beauty and value become fully manifest, although, even on a wall, their charm is most insinuating.

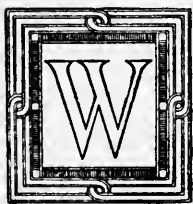
Other modern painters of the first order have turned to decoration as a means of expression. Degas, Gauguin, Manet and Toulouse-Lautrec,— of whom Conder saw a great deal, — occasionally ornamented fans, Monet decorated panels, and Renoir enriched porcelains. These things, however, were mere relaxations and amusements for the men just mentioned. The painting of a fan, for Conder, was the most serious business of his life, and his name is inseparable from his perishable specialty. Every indication of tightness, from which his oils sometimes suffer, is absent from these fans. A certain reverberation of wondrous flowing limpid color results from his regard for the delicate sheen and texture of the material,

and the subjects exhale the beauty and enchanting melody of Verlaine. The compositions follow most skilfully the shape of the fans, along the edges of which, on balustrades and balconies, the women are grouped in profusion. Usually there are medallions in grisaille, tangled French garlands, and decorative drifting spangles, which, it may be noted, were borrowed by his friend Beardsley, and frequently employed by the latter in an infinite number of original ways.

Conder also painted panels, curtains, bed-coverings, and even costumes. Bing, the well-known dealer and enthusiastic japonisant, when he founded his maison de l'Art Nouveau, commissioned him to decorate a beautiful boudoir in white silk, which fortunate visitors who climbed to the upper stories and passed through the Denis bedroom, may still remember. The hanging panels of this room, which have found their way to America have been happily described by Jacques Blanche as "*capricieuses aquarelles, bordées de franges de perles blanches, d'un exquis raffinement de composition et de couleur, ingénieuse transposition dans une langue moderne, des bergeries, des gallants décamérons poudrés du dix-huitième siècle.*" Fritz Thaulow, who owned them at one time, was one of the many other artists asked to do something original for Bing's remarkable establishment and in that way there sprang up an acquaintanceship between the two men which soon developed into friendship. To Conder this proved to be a great blessing, for when the poor

fellow's mind began to drift, and he was slowly going to pieces, he found a haven of refuge in the home of the genial northerner at Dieppe. There he would often meet the unfortunate Wilde after the latter's downfall, and Conder would sit around the fireside with the Thaulow family listening attentively, while the poet told his exquisite prose fancies to the admiring, fascinated children. Occasionally the crumbling artist would also improvise on silk for his kind hostess, and these gems still adorn Mme. Thaulow's home in Christiania. To the very end of his maimed life he had many projects and lovely visions, which were tinged with the weariness and resignation which we see in the fine portraits of him by Baron de Meyer, whose wife so often posed for Conder's figures. His last works, showing many signs of failing power, will in no way affect the security of his niche in the temple of enduring Beauty. Today he is a *maître précieux*, known only to those interested in the by-ways of art, but the time will surely come when his works will be rediscovered to usher in a new artistic golden era. In the meanwhile, he lies buried in a grave like Omar's, near which the nightingale loves to sing and fading roses drop their fragrant petals.

RICKETTS AND SHANNON



WHEN Roger Fry followed the example of Herr Meier-Graefe and hailed the new Post-impressionist masters, almost all London blindly succumbed. Eager crowds rushed to see the latest amusing sensation at the Grafton Galleries, critics hid their cudgels and chanted hymns of praise, and the puzzled unwilling dealers finally opened their doors to the distorted masterpieces. Almost the only oasis in the town was the famous studio of Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, on Lansdowne Road, where you could leave the turmoil behind and find the steady sacred flame of beauty quietly burning. Fine examples of Egyptian art, jewels of the ancient Persian miniaturists, antique marbles, bronzes by Rodin and Legros, charming Tanagra, drawings by Barye, Daumier, and the Chinese masters, the harmonious works of Puvis de Chavannes, the graceful designs of Outamaro and Watteau, were among the treasures which were there collected together by the two artists, and no higher praise of their own original works



THE ARTIST
Lithograph by Charles H. Shannon



THE LADY IN BLACK FUR
Oil Painting by Charles Shannon
The National Gallery of Canada

is needed than to state that they hold their own in such company. It is indeed a fortunate circumstance that the rare culture of these two enthusiasts has not been sterile, and has expressed itself in paintings, bronzes, and graphic works of charm, sensitiveness, and exquisite beauty. Ricketts, like Fromentin, has also mastered the art of expression in words, and has written some of the sanest essays on Art in contemporary literature.

As far back as 1884, the two artists met in a school at Lambeth, where they were learning to engrave on wood, and they have been inseparable ever since. As their friend Mr. Lewis Hind puts it: "They live together; they collect together; they work in adjoining studios, and in any account of the life, aims, and appreciations of Mr. Shannon, the name of Mr. Ricketts runs to the tongue as dutifully as that of Sullivan to Gilbert, or Fletcher to Beaumont." It is surprising, therefore, to find that the influence of one upon the creations of the other is almost imperceptible. As a matter of fact, they worked together only at the beginning of their careers, when they were still actively engaged in producing graphic works for the sumptuous quarto "The Dial," and later for the publications of the Vale Press.

The first number of their protest against commercialism appeared in 1889, and was followed at intervals by four other parts. The versatility of Ricketts turned quite naturally to the realm of applied art, and with William Morris he became

one of the leaders in the revival of good printing.¹ The production of "The Dial" culminated in the establishment of the Vale Press, and its publications were immediately recognized as superior in many ways to those of the Kelmscott. Morris was inspired by the mediæval printers. Ricketts followed in the footsteps of the Italians, and in "Daphnis and Chloe" he was responsible not alone for the woodcuts, but also for the arrangement of the page and every other feature. The engravings for this book and its successor, "Hero and Leander," were designed and engraved on wood by both artists, and now they are no longer quite sure which of them made some of the designs. Harmony and a uniform style rather than originality was sought for in these first experiments, and the famous Aldine "Hypnerotomachia" (1499) was drawn upon for many of the details. Very often they employed the happy conceit of putting their own portraits into the illustrations, but not infrequently the designs are almost like tracings from the fifteenth-century book. The Vale type was first used for "The Early Poems of John Milton," and in it the remarkable inventive skill of Ricketts and his fastidious taste are crystallized. In all, the press issued some fifty books, which are contributions of lasting worth to the spirit of our time, and after 1903 when its doors were closed, Ricketts devoted himself to painting and sculpture. In these later

¹ A good concise history of the entire movement is given by Holbrook Jackson in the nineteenth chapter of his book "The Eighteen Nineties" (1913).



DON JUAN
Painting by Charles Ricketts
Collection of John F. Krausbaar, Esq.



POSTER FOR "THE DYNASTS"
Lithograph by Charles Ricketts

works Ricketts strikes a distinct personal note, although he displays affinities with the Preraphaelites and Delacroix on the one hand, and with Rodin, the late president of the International, on the other.

The Preraphaelite influence is also noticeable in the paintings of Shannon, but he is really a direct descendant of Watts and the Venetians of the Golden Age. Rich in ideas, you will find him making innumerable studies in various experimental media before he finally gives his subject a place on the canvas. Most of the subjects are found suggested among his lithographs. Indeed, it is by these studies that he is best known here.¹ He is an acknowledged master of the medium, and has exhausted all its possibilities except in the field of color-printing. He will probably never employ color, however, for he can make sunlight play among the green trees, or catch the gleam of foam on the sea, by the use of line and scratching.

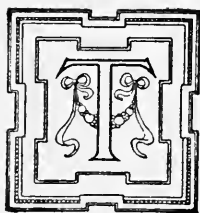
Shannon is devoted to the tondo, and he arranges his figures in a circle with the same unerring skill that Conder displayed in decorating a fan. Not the least charming of his works is a series of poetical circular woodcuts rhythmically well balanced, printed in two colors after the manner of Ugo da Carpi and the eighteenth-century prints of Skippe and Zannetti. Many of his lithographs also are circular or fan-shaped, and it is a pleasure to record that the admirable

¹ As a portrait painter Americans still confuse him with Mr. J. J. Shannon.

catalogue which Ricketts made of these prints in 1898 did not mean the end of his activities in the medium. Ricketts himself occasionally makes lithographs and his poster for Thomas Hardy's *Dynasts* is a distinguished achievement.

Shannon's works resemble those of his friend only in the fact that the impulses which created them, whether inspired by the Bible or by some strange fable, seem purely artistic rather than religious or emotional. As artists they are not popular, perhaps because they are not boldly assertive. It is a mistake, however, to assume that their art is a mere reflection, because they talk so sympathetically and learnedly of the great men whose works they collect. Their noble aspirations and quiet devotion to their work are in themselves tremendously valuable as protests, at a time when delicate taste and feeling are conspicuously absent from the work of so many impatient young men.

LÉON BAKST



THE city of Paris, which calls him “notre incomparable,” shares the honor of having discovered Léon Bakst with Serge de Diaghilew, the enterprising director of the Russian ballet. Petrograd, the ar-

tist's birthplace, treated him rather harshly, although it had not denied him a certain measure of success, so long as he consented to work in the fashionable manner and devote himself to portraiture and the commonplace fields of art. His portraits, however, are not conventional achievements, if we may judge by the sensitive likenesses of the poets Andrej Bely and Jean Cocteau or the crisp character sketch of the composer Balakirew, and it is interesting to learn that he is at present engaged in making pastels of the fashionable world of a *ville lumière*. Bakst's historical paintings also show distinct originality, although they reveal the influence of Kaulbach and Cornelius. These works won commercial recognition for the artist, but they did not satisfy his restless nature, and he went to Paris in search of freedom. His first visit to the city of his adoption took place in 1895 when Bakst was twenty-

seven years old, and there he worked for three years under the versatile Finnish artist Albert Edelfeldt. The Russian Government was at that time still rejoicing over the French alliance, and Bakst was commissioned to paint a canvas commemorating the ovation given to Admiral Avelan of the Russian fleet when he visited France. This painting, which now hangs in the Museum at Petrograd, is a notable work, but it is to be regretted that he is not represented by his masterpiece in oil, the *Terror Antiquus*, which won the gold medal at the International Exposition at Brussels, in 1910. Long before it was painted, Bakst with his friends Constantin Somow, Alexandre Benois, and the late Valentin Sérow, were known as progressive propagandists, and they started the stimulating magazine "*Mir Iskusstwa*" ("The World of Art"). Bakst sought further relief from uncongenial activities by making exquisite black-and-white rococo book decorations, which show that he was acquainted with the works of Aubrey Beardsley. Interior decorations in a style resembling Empire, miniature paintings, lithographs, strange caricatures, mural designs like the delicately beautiful "*Swallows and Mimosa*," and pretty theatrical figurines were other relaxations. The Russian capital, however, would not tolerate any very daring innovations, and Bakst was severely condemned by the Academy when he sent in a realistic painting of an old woman holding the mutilated remains of her son in her arms, representing the Virgin Mary weeping over the body

of Christ. The attack upon him led to open hostility. Realizing that he could never hope to succeed while continually up in arms against officialdom, he finally left Petrograd and he now resides in a well-appointed studio on the Boulevard Malesherbes.

It was not until 1906, at the admirable Russian exhibition which was then arranged in Paris by Diaghilew, that Bakst and other talented men won more general recognition. The distinguished regisseur urged a group of the exhibiting artists to work for the Russian Imperial theatres, and Bakst, who is a devoted student of Homer, was asked to make designs for classical plays with Greek settings, like the "Ædipus." His originality, however, again aroused old enemies at home, and their mutterings were not hushed until Paris set the seal of her approval on the brilliant innovator.

It was our privilege to be present when Bakst obtained his real introduction at the Théâtre du Chatelet in June, 1909. From the moment when the curtain arose to the music which Arensky had written for the artist's ballet "Cléopâtre," until the amorous queen's galley glided down the river with its precious burden, there was never a false note struck. The settings were built upon extremely simple lines,—a vast Egyptian hall surrounded by massive columns between which you caught glimpses of the glistening sapphire Nile. The prevailing color was a brilliant orange, and the great stones, which seemed to have absorbed the golden sunlight, suggested deserts

of glittering powdered sand outside. It was what one might expect from the artist who afterwards told us that he conceived a stage setting primarily not as a landscape or as architecture, but as though it were a painting into which the human figures had not yet been painted. "From each setting," he continued, "I discard the entire range of nuances which do not amplify or intensify the hidden spirit of the fable." Add to this the fact that the composer, the maître de ballet, the stage decorator, the dancers and mimes, were all of the same race working in harmony, and you will not be surprised at the artistic unity of the production. The composers orchestrated for the ears, Bakst for the eyes. The inimitable interpreters were Pavlowa, dainty and divine, the charming Karsavina, the incomparable Nijinsky, their admirable dancing-master Fokine, who has done so much for the Russian ballet, and the strange Mme. Rubinstein, whose mysterious beauty dominated the drama. As the story unfolded, we saw groups of sleek Syrians in silver, gaudy Jewesses with headdresses of pearls and rubies, svelte Egyptian dancers in golden tissues, Dionysian priestesses, corybantes and black serviteurs, whose extraordinary costumes were always in keeping with their respective characters. It was a vision of the scene in Gautier's story, so satisfying and enchanting that the great audience held its breath. Bakst's fame was assured, although he had only just begun to disclose the unsuspected sides of his inventive genius. The



COSTUME FOR A DANCER IN "LE DIEU BLEU"
Water Color Drawing by Léon Bakst

productions which followed in the French capital and in London were a succession of surprises and triumphs, and it became difficult to remain a collected observer or critic before these dazzling creations, which aroused feverish emotions and overcame the senses like a flask of attar of roses.

It was our Isadora Duncan who first introduced the Russians to the possibilities of the poetry of motion. Before her time many remarkable dancers had been pirouetting and wasting their magnificent technical equipment on the *démodé* ballet form which in other countries had long since made way for a freer art of dancing. In Russia the art had always been under royal patronage and the origin of this school may be traced back to Peter the Great, who was a passionate lover of the dance. It was his interest and influence that paved the way for its renaissance under Didelot several centuries later, and its further development under Marius Petipa, the first eminent native director. In 1802 Didelot became the head of the royal Petrograd school, and he inspired that institution with his own high serious ideals. He advocated a severe and arduous form of training from early childhood, as the only foundation for supreme excellence, and his ideas are still held in reverence. Future stars are admitted at the age of eight or nine, and henceforth the state is responsible for their general education as well as for their ballet training. From four to five hours are devoted daily to such exercises as will develop a perfect control of all the limbs, and this study

never ceases even when the dancers attain leading rank. The famous graduates from this ballet school already mentioned, and a unique company of gifted Russian composers and scenic artists, were the material from which the master mind of M. Serge de Diaghilew wove the alluring art form known as the modern Russian Ballet. It was for this original director that Bakst extracted the poetry hidden in every epoch and showed that he possessed in an amazing degree the Greek *εὐτραπεία* — what Matthew Arnold called “happy flexibility” — the power to properly adapt his varied talents to any subject in hand.

In “Cléopâtre” and “Salomé” he was, of course, Egyptian. In “Narcisse,” “Daphnis and Chloe,” “L’Après-Midi d’un Faune,” and Verhaeren’s “Hélène de Sparte,” we saw his Greek inventions, and his designs crystallized forever our happy memories of delicate archaic maidens in light draperies with golden ornaments in their hair, of dancing Satyrs, and above all, of Nijinsky as Horace’s perplexed Faun, “*nympharum fugientum amator*,” bounding into the air by some magic power and slowly descending to touch the earth and start on still higher flights. Bakst’s sparkling drawings of him are not copies from antique vases, statuary, or bas-reliefs in the sense that Thorwaldsen’s or Canova’s works are. Instead of making weak imitations or classically correct drawings, Bakst first assimilates and then transforms everything he touches. We derive greater pleasure from his works than from any

Greek restorations, because he has absorbed the essentials of the ancient style and has breathed the breath of intense life into them. In "Le Dieu Bleu" he treated Anamese and Javanese styles after the same fashion, his prodigious exotic imagination calling to mind the art of Gustave Moreau and Odilon Rédon. These drawings have the glamour of the Indies but retain the stamp and style of Léon Bakst. The detail is amazingly intricate, but he has learned the secret of subordinating it to the main lines of his design, just as an Eastern artist would have done. "Thamar" is hybrid, showing Trans-Caucasian and Chinese origins. Then there are a series of ballets — "Les Papillons" and "Le Carnaval," among others — where sauterie plays an important role. For these the costumes do not differ so radically from what any other clever decorator might have designed. Among operas we have the brilliant rococo setting for Wolf-Ferrari's "The Secret of Suzanne" and superb national costumes and scenery for "Boris Godounow," in which the Byzantine note predominates. The mediæval period furnished inspiration for D'Annunzio's "Pisanelle" and the same poet's "St. Sébastien," from which we carried away a vivid mental picture of the martyred saint impersonated by the morbidly graceful Mme. Rubinstein, who made the sophisticated Paris audience exclaim, "Mais, elle va mourir!" Quite recently Bakst startled his admirers with the athletic ballet "Les Jeux," and the extravagant costumes for the "Légende

de Joseph" of Richard Strauss, and then delighted them by making a number of fantasies on modern costumes which were quickly seized upon by purveyors to women of fashion who made his color harmonies the latest cry. In his most recent work, the costumes for Stravinsky's amusing "L'Oiseau de Feu," his genius again revealed itself as it did in the ballet "Scheherazade," still regarded as his masterpiece and most characteristic work.

In this magnificent prelude to the Arabian Nights, Bakst was his amazing oriental self. The ancient Persians themselves could not have found fault with his marvelous setting. No Frenchman, nor any artist influenced by French ideas, would have dared to use such a gamut of brilliant colors at a time when our drab, occidental culture sought appropriate expression in flat subdued tones. Bakst, however, was an exuberant Semitic barbarian, and he wanted his colors, like his characters, to sing and shout and dance with joyous abandon. Fortunately, Paris stood aghast long enough for her discerning arbiters of good taste to win the day for the Russian artist, and a renaissance of color set in. Emerald, indigo and geranium, the leopard's spots and the scales of the serpent, black, rose, vermilion and triumphant orange, were all shrieking to be heard, and shrieking in harmony. It was an orgy of color to the last possible tension. Nature was sacrificed by him, though not so violently as by Van Gogh or the Post-Impressionists, in order to



COSTUME FOR M. MASSINE IN "L'OISEAU DE FEU"
Water Color Drawing by Léon Bakst

arouse the emotions. The effect of the colors was enforced and exalted by the voluptuous movements of the dancers and the astonishing music which Rimsky-Korsakow had written for this miracle of joint creation. Had the author of "Les Fleurs du Mal" been present, he would have hailed the colorist as a great epic poet. Haughty sultans embraced their false sultanas, grinning eunuchs, like gorgeous speckled birds, dangled golden keys while their doom was impending, powerful exultant lovers, black as ebony, whirled the frenzied women about, to the tunes of baleful Hindu musicians. The maddest desires dwelt in this palace of splendid sins, where eternal agony was the price of the happiness of the poignant fleeting moment. It was a fascinating dream of brutal sensuality, of regal jealousy. As a French critic pointed out, every color was used by Bakst save white — the symbol of purity and arctic frigidity — to accentuate the warmth of the passions of these ardent lovers. It was sensual, but in a youthful, robust way — like the Song of Songs, or a Bacchanale of Rubens.

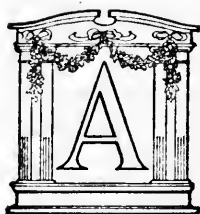
Here at last was an artist who deigned to devote his gifts to the stage. In Russia his appearance would not have been regarded as a rare phenomenon, for they were accustomed to the presence in the theatre of their best artists, men who revelled in the vast spaces and the luxurious amplitude which the stage allows. Bakst's friend Benois, whose easel paintings are highly esteemed, created the splendor of "Le Pavillon d'Armide"

and "Petruschka." He is a scholarly critic, the author of a valuable History of Painting, and a recognized authority on French styles. The primitive Russian periods, the desolate steppes, fantastic forests, and the savagely colored clothes are specialties of Théodor Fédorovsky, and of Roerich, Director of the Academy at Petrograd. The décors by the latter for his own "Sacre du Printemps" and for Borodine's opera, "Prince Igor," created a sensation and elicited a eulogy from Jacques Blanche, who considered their violent crudity epoch-making theatrical innovations. Boris Anisfeld, now in America, whose beautiful scenery for the submarine ballet of "Sadko" was used at the Metropolitan Opera House, is a talented member of the group we have mentioned. Paris also made much of the interesting artist Soudejkine, a color symbolist whose art has much in common with the Post-Impressionists. His theories are as vague as the verbal paradoxes of the Futurists, but the appeal of his decorations for "Salomé" is swift and compelling and his success in the theatre has been considerable. Other gifted men were employed by Diaghilew to rehabilitate the Russian stage, but to add to the list here would not answer any important purpose.

Bakst's triumphs, however, did not end with the theatre, for when his little maquettes, glowing like Persian parchment, were exhibited, the finest continental connoisseurs were eager to acquire them and the city of Paris honored him by purchasing a collection of his works. It will be readily

seen that these alluring aquarelles, with their rich touches of silver and gold, are things of passion in themselves and have a value quite apart from the stage. Indeed, in the case of many of the Greek designs we almost prefer to enjoy their repose in a quiet studio rather than in the theatre. Studying a mixed group of them we can best appreciate what a great virtuoso Bakst is. They are not mere fashion plates or ordinary costume drawings, although the vestments, which move with the natural rhythm of birds' wings, seem to be living things. The figures, whose bodies and very souls are enveloped by color, are only lightly suggested, being subordinate to the gestures and draperies, which accentuate and display to the greatest advantage the beauty of the young supple muscles, round bosoms, and powerful thighs. Every drawing, whether in a tender or vigorous mood, is intensely alive and singularly persuasive, and its æsthetic value will eventually be heightened by its historical importance. When the huge settings will crumble and the fashion for opera and the ballet will change, we shall still have these exciting designs to remind us that we had in our midst a stimulating artist, who delivered us forever from the old-fashioned *divertissement*. Bakst's name will then be linked not only with those of the prominent contemporary painters, but with modern innovators like William Morris and Gordon Craig, who from time to time gave an impetus to decoration and infused the theatre and our lives with new spirit.

MAURICE STERNE



FEW years ago, while enjoying the privilege of examining the interesting collections of Hamilton Field in Brooklyn, my attention was arrested by two drawings which seemed to be the work of some inspired Italian primitive, and it was an agreeable surprise to learn that they were made by a young American painter, Maurice Sterne. A few months later Sterne's name was cited by a discriminating critic in London as an example of the silent, hidden worker whose influence was acknowledged wherever the progress of art was seriously followed. Curiosity was naturally aroused by this chance acquaintance with a new name, and the determination to meet Sterne was finally reached after a conversation with Dr. Max J. Friedlander, at that time the Director of the Kupferstich Kabinet in Berlin. Various Americans were being discussed and the director admitted their talents and abilities, but stated that in his opinion only two Americans had appeared whose influence on art is of cosmopolitan importance,—Whistler and Maurice Sterne, who was then living near Rome. In summer, to avoid the unbearable

heat, Sterne worked in a simple studio at Anticoli-Corrado, a tiny hill-town in the mountains. From the window of the slowly moving train Tivoli can be seen, with its waterfalls, ruined temples, aqueducts, and villas, and you follow the vale of the turbid Anio, flowing tumultuously through groves of silvery green olives and fertile vineyards. Dreaming of Horace and his Sabine farm, I arrived at a deserted station on either side of which stand hills capped by two ancient picturesque towns, Anticoli-Corrado and Roviano.

A sturdy shepherd was passing with his flock, and I asked him where the artist lived. He pointed up the long winding road leading to the village on the right and informed me that he was one of the many who posed for Signor Sterne. Anticoli is inhabited almost exclusively by models, and the artists in Rome rely on it to supply them with inspiration. It is a strange place, characteristically Italian, full of appalling filth, and inhabitants of great beauty. The women are like goddesses, carrying water on their heads from the public fountain, in shining copper vessels resembling amphoræ; the goatherds are ideals of masculine strength and grace, and they all maintain their charm in notoriously dirty houses, mingling with squealing black swine, cattle, poultry, and innumerable half-naked bambini. Sterne, lightly clad in a suit of spun silk, came down the steep path to meet me, and after a short climb we were resting in a pleasant grape arbor, built on a small plateau overlooking Anticoli.

Here in the open air his models posed. While he talked about his work Sterne impressed me as charmingly frank and unaffected in manner. Predictions of future achievements, contemptuous or glowing notices, would have no effect on him. He was serious and modest, confident in the soundness of his artistic ideals, and a man who would never make concessions to win popularity.

He was born in 1877 at Libau, a Russian seaport on the Baltic, and when about twelve years old he emigrated with his widowed mother to America, where they became units in the great melting pot on New York's East Side. The boy went to night school while earning a livelihood as a bar waiter, an engraver's apprentice, or in other humbler ways. Later he joined a class at the Old Academy of Design on Twenty-third Street, and attended the art schools of the city. It did not take long for his teachers and fellow-students to single him out as possessing an exceptional talent. He won the offered prizes with ease. William M. Chase encouraged and honored him by purchasing one of his canvases for a substantial sum. He also achieved local fame by making a series of etchings,—chief among which is the Coney Island set,—and he assisted the late James D. Smillie as instructor of etching. Sterne's plates are notable for their sincerity, freshness, and novelty, and they received special and very favorable mention when they were afterwards exhibited at the Paris Salons. His work with the needle served to help him win the first traveling



BALINESE MOTHER

*Painting by Maurice Sterne, Rhode Island School of Design,
Providence, R. I.*

scholarship offered by the Academy through the generosity of a former academician, and he left for Europe in 1904.

Such a trip is usually regarded as the turning-point of an artist's career. In Sterne's case, however, the change in environment did not mean much. It was a period of unrest. For a time he loafed about Paris, leading the bohemian life of its Quartier Latin, and occasionally he executed a copy of an old master in the Louvre. An extraordinary example of this period is his copy of Mantegna's "Parnassus," the essentials of which are beautifully suggested in a notably free and vigorous manner. Sterne at this time also came into touch with the work of Gauguin and Cézanne and of their Parisian disciples, but it should be noted that his art is not diluted post-impressionism, for he did not begin to find himself until chance took him to Greece. There, among the tranquil marble gods, in the clear golden light, Sterne realized as never before that the secret of the ancients had been lost, that his painting had been a kind of artistic colored photography, cheap naturalism, a weak, feminine, anæmic art, without any of the strength, nobility, or superb simplicity of the precious fragments at Delphi. He buried himself in a monastery at Hymettos and began over again to learn to draw the human figure, trying first to forget his old manner and then striving to achieve a little of the masculine power and luster of the bronze charioteer or the distinction of the Caryatides on the Erechtheum.

For those who recalled Sterne's exhibition, held about twenty years ago at the Old Country Sketch Club on Broadway, it was difficult to realize that his Italian works, shown in 1912, were by the same man. Only etchings of that earlier period were exhibited, and all the drawings and paintings, with the exception of the above-mentioned copy of Mantegna, were made after 1908. Some of these drawings were marvels of painstaking care, at times reminding us of the early Germans. Others recall Pollaiuolo's *Battle of Ten Nudes* and the frescoes in the *Villa Galletti*, not only in feeling but also the special manner of preparing the paper, the use of the silverpoint, and other details. It was easy to understand why a connoisseur like Berenson enthused over these. Such an achievement as his drawing of an old toothless Italian woman now in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard could be credited to very few artists of recent times. Sterne, very properly however, regarded these drawings as mere themes and preparations for future work. In studying the entire series we saw the order in which they were made, each drawing being simpler than its predecessor, but all having the indispensable facts of form and character. The same was true of the studies for a large fresco entitled "*The Harvest*." This composition enabled Sterne to impose upon himself a great task and the solution of many fascinating artistic problems, — the human figure at all ages and in all its natural poses typifying abstract ideas of maternity, youthful

energy, relaxation, patience, the weight of bodies, masculine strength, and so on. We can hardly hope that Sterne will ever complete this colossal work which served him then as a motive for research.

His first effort in sculpture, the "Pasquale," was also extremely fine,—a little masterpiece in its way. It had more naïveté than the work of Maillol, if not his perfect science, and the criticism that the treatment of the hair was a trifle archaic was answered on seeing the model. His paintings and later drawings were far more perplexing and were condemned by a hasty public as deliberate attempts on the artist's part to destroy his good reputation. They were, however, really the logical successors of the earlier works. With a single expressive line Sterne accomplished what it would have taken him many hours or days to do a few years before. The complicated anatomy of a bent knee, a face drawn with agony, the limpness of a dead or sleeping figure, — all these things he could suggest in a final inevitable manner with the simplest possible means. No shadows, elaborate lines, or ornaments were needed. Everything not absolutely essential was eliminated, and the simplicity of means employed added tremendously to the power of the effect. At times they reminded you of Rodin's *instantanées*, but at rest. Today, after our acquaintance with the post-impressionists and cubists, these drawings and paintings are as clear in their meaning as a painting of the play of light on a lily pond by Monet.

Not so long ago plein-airism was as much of a mystery as post-impressionism is now, and Gounod's *Faust*, it will be remembered, was at one time the unmelodious music of the future. Indeed, the attitude of the intelligent art-loving public toward original work of this kind is prettily illustrated by a story told about Douglas Jerrold. The wit was ill and was trying for the first time to read Browning's "*Sordello*." He kept at it for a while, but finally sank back on his pillow, helpless and bewildered, and cried out, "Oh, God, I am an idiot!" But even the Browning clubs understand "*Sordello*" today.

Sterne made no claims for those paintings except that they were the works of a serious experimenter. Even then he was not a reflection of the post-impressionistic movement, but was rather at the opposite pole of modern art. His drawings were antique in their fine severity, and some of the paintings revealed the beauty of an austere unbroken line, a noble Greek tranquillity, a fine rhythm in composition, and a tonic quality in their cool purples and warm browns. He did not find himself however, as a painter, until he settled in Bali, one of the islands of the East Indian Archipelago. Since it was there, that he divested himself of the few trammels of artistic convention which still clung to him, we may be pardoned for quoting freely a personal note to his exhibition of Balinese works. "Many will wonder," wrote Sterne, "where and what is Bali, and I have been asked to say something about it. For two

reasons this is very difficult. First, my twenty months' sojourn there, was an experience of the senses, and how is one to describe the perfume of a flower, strains of music, or the different sensations of touch? Second, for comprehension, similarity of experience is essential, — imagination is of little help when called upon to realize forms, colors, and sounds, unlike anything else we are familiar with, — and Bali is so very unlike any other place in the West or in the East. . . . The Balinese alone of all the inhabitants of the archipelago have to this day retained the Hindu religion. Islam, with its art barrenness, has been imposed upon the neighboring islands. In abstract, austere Mohammedanism there is little room for art, — it has sunk to mere decoration, tolerated as a prayer-rug under the feet of the devotee, — whereas to the impassioned Hindu it is a means of getting closer to God. With them art is religion's language, understood by God. Symmetry are its words, rhythm its phrases, perfect balance its sentences. Like the immense active volcano towering above the terraced ricefields and teeming tropical vegetation, Religion, passionate and agitated, projects from their daily tasks. The same fire or unknown force which from the bowels of the earth exhales steam and molten lava from the mouth of the crater, gushes from the heart of the frenzied worshiper, leaving him prostrate and in a deathly stupor at the feet of his deity. A fiery, emotional, passionate religion, the gentler Gods of Hindustan have been almost forgotten. Knowing the power of de-

struction, Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver have sunk to a secondary place. Shiva the Destroyer is honored most. The religious rites are for the most part hysteric trances or frenzies, and the elements are symbolically expressed in their sacred dances at the temple festivals. In the largest painting shown in my first exhibition, I have tried to show one of these dances. Fire, Water, and Air are represented by priests and priestesses carrying incense burners, bowls of water and fans. Rapid upward flickering action of flames, threatening sinuous flow of water, and irresistible air are expressed in rhythmic movement and significant gesture.

“Not only religious functions, but the commonest pursuits are carried out with a grace, dignity, and grandeur familiar to us from the finest ancient art alone. What, for instance, could be more prosaic than buying or selling, but here ducks, pigs, and fruit are sold with an air suggestive of sacrifice, incense, flowers, and the altar. In geometric designs they arrange their fish for sale; the fruit is piled up in perfect pyramids; like golden queens they sit enthroned among the richly colored stuffs, and not unlike goddesses they emerge from the miniature mountains of rice. Like splendid Persian rugs spread in the intense shade of the gigantic banyan trees, are the bazaars. Here nature has become the medium of art, and art the expression of nature. Art is hardly needed where the æsthetic sense is stimulated by life, and not, as in the West, by art alone.”



PUEBLO INDIAN
Bronze by Maurice Sterne

From eight to ten thousand studies were made by Sterne during those three years in the East. His painting became solid and straightforward, and his method of expression complete. The spirit of the island is conventionalized and interpreted in the superb way in which Gauguin treated Tahiti. The primitive dignity of the inhabitants, the shaven nuns, the strange ascetics, the angular movements of the temple dancers are all handled with fine simplicity and notable success, and the marvelous color, suggesting the eternal dusk of the tropical jungle, is always in keeping with the subject. Magnificent color is used to build up the forms and shadows. Gorgeous low-keyed harmonies of pigment are found in each canvas. The tricks of Monsieur Matisse are avoided, and without losing any of the masculinity, which Hamilton Field pointed out as one of his distinguishing traits, he has become refined where he was formerly rude. But it would be absurd to exhaust the stock phraseology or catch words of art criticism on these works. The more one studies them the more beautiful they appear, and as Rodin, their admirer, said, after seeing them, "Their quality needs no *réclame*."

After his return to America, Sterne added a lighter side to his art by making a series of beautiful flower studies. Peonies, hyacinths, lilies, and tulips were painted in a novel manner. Other interludes were a portrait of Dr. Lowndes in Sterne's Italian style, and some remarkable drawings oriental in feeling of Mabel Dodge, whom he sub-

sequently married. Rock formation at Provincetown on Cape Cod also interested him but he became artistically repatriated only after his trip to Taos. He began modelling and drawing the American Indians with his old enthusiasm, and there are also some graceful drawings of the pupils of the Duncan School of Dancers. These studies, we hope, may lead up to some greater work, which will at last give him the high position to which so many of us feel that he is entitled.

PAUL MANSHIP



WHEN Paul Manship returned to America in 1912, after a three years residence at the American Academy in Rome, he enjoyed an enviable measure of success. Every critic praised him, the progressives commented upon his simplicity, the academicians, who regarded him as one of their number, pointed with pride to his superb technique, and his debut was regarded as a justification for the existence of the Academy itself. Medals and prizes were awarded him, architects were eager to collaborate with him and he was given commissions of an inspiring nature. A temperate discussion of his merits seemed impossible. It was a dangerous "succes fou" for a young man.

Manship was then only twenty-six years old, and his career had been in no way remarkable. He had begun drawing from life in the school of Fine Arts at St. Paul, his native city, and was disappointed to find that he had practically no feeling whatever for color. A painter's career was therefore out of the question, but while he eked out a living as a photo-engraver, and by

making drawings for medical works, he felt vaguely that he must express himself with some artistic medium and he kept pursuing the evasive goddess. Finally he drifted to New York and attended classes at the Art Students League. Happy chance brought him into touch with Solon Borglum and his training henceforth was of a very favorable kind. Borglum was then at work on some equestrian statues and he engaged the younger man as his assistant. Manship was present at the dissection of one or two carcasses, and it is to Borglum's influence that he attributes his keen interest in animal forms. His next studies were made under another sound teacher, Charles Grally, at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and still later he worked with Isidore Konti. In 1909 a bas relief of an great originality entitled "Rest after Toil" won him the scholarship offered by the American Academy at Rome, and he left for a three years sojourn in Europe.

At that time Manship's tastes in art were quite conventional. He started with the usual enthusiasms, loving in turn the Frenchmen, the Italians and finally the Greeks. Houdon, Michelangelo, Donatello, Meunier and Rodin were all emulated from time to time, but he found himself only after he began to appreciate the Greek primitives. He approached the grander and more profound forms of Hellenistic art through the study of those minute fragments which reveal the simpler and lighter phases of the classic

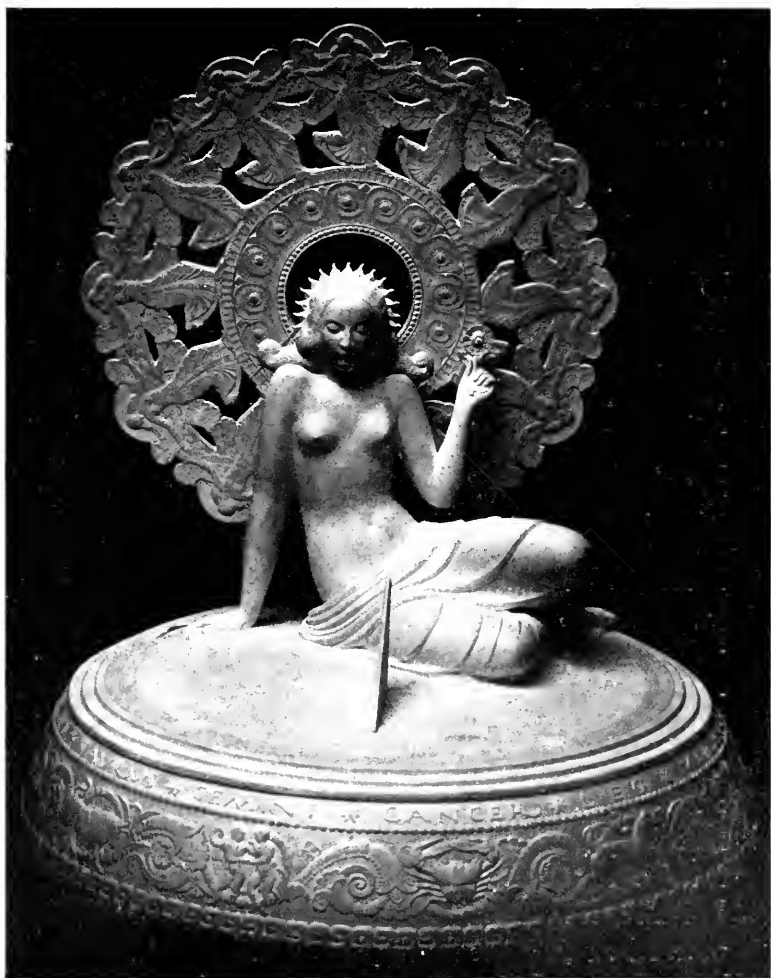


PLAYFULNESS
Bronze by Paul Manship

spirit. A little head spouting water, a drawing on a vase, a carved intaglio, a precious coin, the bronze claw from the statuette of some animal, — these humbler forms helped him to analyze the nobler secrets of the ancients. His three European years were rich in opportunities, and he obviously neglected nothing.

One feature of his grand tour was a walking trip through Spain with Hunt Diederich, and both men have amusing tales to tell of their adventures. Manship, while on his travels, learned a great lesson, — the essential unity of all primitive art, whether Greek, Assyrian, Gothic, Egyptian, or East Indian. The art of the Renaissance strongly influenced the uncompromising lines of his recent remarkable portraits of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and Master Cameron Bradley, but no matter what period interested him, it was first moulded to his own purposes, and his personality was adjusted to the older style. From the very start he invariably produced something original, and when he returned to America with his early works, noted especially for their fascinating line and delicious *imprévu* quality, they were indiscriminately enjoyed and created an exhilarating sensation. Some critics, who had apparently forgotten that men like Alfred Stevens, the greatest English sculptor, had never studied outside of Italy, doubted the wisdom of sending such a gifted youth to a foreign country, but even they recognized in Manship the master of a style which is the product of all that is good

in what he saw, mingled with something which only nature could have endowed him with. After the first flush of pleasure was over, however, his enthusiastic admirers became more sober, seized upon his obvious debt to primitive sculpture, and the critical pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction. They began to have doubts about this remarkable facility and versatility. Were his archaistic conventions anything more than adaptations of antique originals? Was the young man already assuming mannerisms? Did he possess the magnificent patience and seriousness which are absolutely essential to the making of a great artist? Had Paul Manship seen fit to show us in greater detail how he works, he would have given an impressive answer to such derogatory reflections, but like his genial Cornish friend and neighbor, Maxfield Parrish, he refused to follow the prevailing fashion of preserving studio litter, in the shape of inchoate scribbles, and calling them precious drawings. The spirited sketches for his *Boy Hunter* and *Wrestlers* were included in his first comprehensive New York exhibition more or less against his wishes. All the drudgery, the experiments and the doubtfully valuable studies are destroyed, and we have only the exquisitely finished works as his answer to the critics. Instead of fumbling attempts, he shows gem-like reliefs of adorable putti, the draughtsmanship of which is extremely delicate and true. His studies in plaster, and even some of those which for personal reasons he chose to



TIME AND THE DANCING HOURS
Bronze Sun-Dial, by Paul Manship

have cast in bronze, should be looked upon as he looks upon them, — not as an end, but as a possible means, a stage in the evolution of a finished work and merely informing to the student. Only his intimates know what deep thought and study go to the making of these facile-looking, captivating little figures, and it is characteristic of the artist that no marks of painful effort are left. He calls to mind Zola's dictum: "*Dans l'œuvre d'art, je cherche, j'aime l'homme, l'artiste.*" Manship in his work reveals himself as free from every form of morbidity, a frank genial nature overflowing with piquant humor, a man of taste who loves superb workmanship for its own sake. He is still too young and his temperament too joyous to create works breathing the poignant pathos of the magnificent fragments at Rheims, or comparable with the creations of the ancient meditative geniuses, nor is he aiming to produce grandiose figures whose souls are tormented. The Great War, which stirred him deeply, took him back again to his beloved Rome, not in his capacity as an artist, but as a Captain of the Red Cross. Thus far only a few medals have been inspired directly by the conflict, and it would be idle to prophesy about the influence of the war upon his art. To-day his name awakens in our minds the idea of finesse and perfection as contrasted with artistic slovenliness which is such a prevailing fashion in our day. Here is an artist who will never exploit his personality and whose works are so

carefully thought out, that no points are accentuated. Had Brancusi constructed an amusing sculptural caricature on the lines of the "Briseis," the modernists would not fail to call attention to the beautiful simplification, the delightful surface and lovely patina, the solid modelling and the clever way in which the drapery cuts the line of the nude figure at the back, whereas before Manship's work you are lost in simple admiration. It does not attract attention by reason of any obvious geometrical construction. "Briseis" is like a beautiful Grecian vase, exquisite in her symmetry, restraint, and delicate transitions of modelling. Years of conscientious study lie behind her poetical elegance. The sculptor's hand, free from technical constraint, has analyzed her pose and gesture and rendered these freely and easily. Likewise in the "Dancer and Gazelles," the wise spectator skips about with the fragile little animals instead of pondering on the fine architectonic qualities, the perfect triangular design of the group, or the obvious debt which it owes to the bronzes in the Naples Museum. A still more remarkable work is Manship's harmoniously balanced Sun-dial. In the placid figure of Time, the pose of which creates a sinuous line of great beauty, Manship is free and modern in form although there are many obvious archaic Oriental details. The Eastern source of inspiration in this dial, as well as in the recent armillary spheres and the very popular "Flight of Night," is readily acknowledged, and

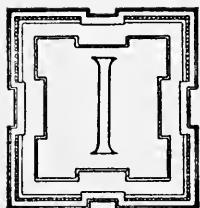


PORTRAIT OF PAULINE FRANCES MANSHIP, THREE WEEKS OLD
By Paul Manship
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

here it may be noted that Manship is an enthusiastic member of the India Society. In fact, one of his post bellum dreams,—after he finishes the monumental decorative sculptures for the gardens of Charles M. Schwab and Herbert Pratt,—is a long stay in the Orient, a journey for which he is preparing by studying Japanese. While such a trip to the East may intensify certain features of his work, the quiet dignity of the Sun-dial, its serenity and notable largeness of conception,—in spite of the jewel-like ornaments, with which his charming abstraction is surrounded,—are standards which it will be difficult to excel. The signs of the Zodiac, the dancing hours, the animals, and other decorative bas-reliefs, are unsurpassed by any American artist. Perfect technically and always consistent with and subsidiary to the main idea, they may be characterized as the expression of Manship's playful exuberance. They are a relaxation from his more ambitious problems, and constitute the special glories of the "Centaur and Dryad," and the portrait of the artist's daughter, his profoundest creation, and a work which never fails to excite wonder. Little Pauline Frances, executed with loving care, must surely be a complete answer to those who still have doubts of the nobility of the artistic aims of Paul Manship. As long as works like this are produced by our artists, plastic art is in safe hands, and standing alone it would be a justification of the high compliment paid the young artist by the trustees of the Metro-

politan Museum of Art, when they commissioned him to make the J. Pierpont Morgan Memorial, to be erected in the Museum. Searching criticism and patient art have gone into the making of this fine tablet, and we have had the pleasure of seeing its various phases, — growing always simpler, and more perfect in detail, as the work progressed. Manship has been fortunate to know in advance exactly where his great relief will be placed, and has taken the play of light and the architectural environment into artistic consideration. It promises to be a *chef-d'œuvre*, worthy of the most distinguished art collector of the past generation, and of the talented artist who created it.

ELIE NADELMAN



IT is still too early to predict what effect the great War will have upon the development of Art in this country. Almost immediately after the conflict started, dealers who had made Paris and London their headquarters flocked to our shores, bringing with them their precious wares and treasures, and later, an exodus of artists started which, if it continues, may be compared to a similar flight from Byzantium to Florence, after the Turks occupied Constantinople in the fifteenth century. The present convulsion will undoubtedly scatter the artists and scholars and all the accumulation of learning in certain European centres, and these will gravitate to peaceful New York, where they are sure of a hospitable reception and where they may be expected to give an immense impetus to science and art.

Elie Nadelman, the Polish sculptor, was among the first of these men to come to America after the war began, and his presence here was immediately felt by his confrères. He was born in Warsaw in 1885, and studied for a time in the

art schools there. It would seem that his early education conferred only irritation upon him and like so many other ambitious students, he finally drifted to Paris, where he remained twelve years. Nadelman had no teacher there, but his residence witnessed his rise from a sincere student into a self-taught man of original ideas, whose best works offer some of the most convincing arguments to those who are in search of propaganda in favor of the modern extremists.

Visitors to his studio are so astonished at the apparently conflicting works which greet their eyes, that their critical faculties are at first in a maze. Beside a serenely calm mask, on the lips of which a strange smile lingers, there are distorted figures in impossible postures, and curious drawings which, when examined superficially, show no trace of obvious or delicate beauty. The average person will hesitate to laugh at these grotesque works, having recently heard of so many brilliant experimentalists whose creations should be approached with respect and even reverence, and if one understands Russian, Polish, French or German, Nadelman, who is always ready to flame up with enthusiasm, will soon convince you of the essential simplicity of his enigmatic designs. He has a charming way of modulating his causerie with expressive gestures, and you quickly see the logical relation of the geometrical forms to those beautiful sculptures, which in the first flush of unexpected pleasure are compared with Greek masterpieces and arouse the hope that here at



PORTRAIT OF A CHILD (MAHOGANY)
By Elie Nadclman

last we have a man who has found at least a spark of the buried fire of the ancients. Nadelman's explanations are indeed so clear, that they serve not merely as a vindication of his theoretical drawings and sculptures, but he even enables a layman mentally to transform the intricate curves and shadows into the subtle play of light on his polished marble, bronze, or mahogany statuettes. One of his most interesting artistic doctrines deals with the respect which an artist owes to the peculiar nature of the material in which he works. "A rough stone," Nadelman says, "will refuse all the positions we may wish to give it, if these are unsuited to it. By its own will, it falls back into the position that its shape in conjunction with its mass demands. Here is a wonderful force, a life, that plastic art should express and if this life of the material is not destroyed, but is cultivated and enriched by the artist, it may acquire a wonderful power of expression that will stir the world." A piece of sculpture, therefore, should be created like a crystal, — physical laws should govern its fashioning, and the more of art there is discoverable in the work, the less the individuality of the artist becomes apparent. The curiously interwoven lines of these drawings which often suggest mineral crystallization, anticipate the beauty of the plastic form and its unbroken surface, the exquisite turn of the curves is merely accentuated by interfering lines, and the shaded portions represent the perfect rhythm of harmoniously balanced masses. The necessity and

logic of every stage of work is cleverly explained by the artist in phrases like these, and when he transfers this harmonious play of line and surface from the drawings to his stone, wood, or metal, a satisfying tranquillity and a delicious serenity of soul result. Had he, however, shown only drawings or *recherches* in sculpture, Nadelman's name would doubtless be added to the vague group of artists known as post-impressionists, — a classification made hopelessly confusing in the presence of his extraordinary portraits and the beautiful heads, which for want of a better word we shall describe as Hellenistic. In this connection it is interesting to know that the Steins who were among the first to praise the work of Picasso and Matisse were also admirers of Nadelman, and Octave Mirbeau, protagonist of Van Gogh, was among the sculptor's first patrons. The connoisseurs just mentioned ardently admire his researches, but the artist himself has repeatedly told us that noble abstractions like "La Mystérieuse" are the flowers of his achievement. When he is more directly concerned with nature, as in his enchanting visions of fleeting childhood, his task is of course far simpler, and the result invariably convincing and superb. These delightful portraits arouse the greatest enthusiasm. Often the final touches are made directly on the marble from the living model and subtle shadows result from this handling of the stone. The vigorous yet refined head of Francis Nielson, the exquisite delicacy of the portrait of Mrs. Stevenson Scott, the highly

original and sympathetic study of Miss Jane Barger Wallach, and the amazing, soft, all-embracing line, which begins on the chest of the bust of Mrs. Charles Templeton Crocker, and then goes on and on along the fine throat, over the pompadour and down the back, are only a few of his remarkable achievements in portraiture. These force one to wonder whether the gilded "Femme Nue," — fat and naïve, — the strange "Hermaphroditus," the scrutinizing head with slit eyes and blue hair, the delicious clowns and musicians, or the reclining wooden figure of a nude woman, are primarily intended not to amuse, but rather to crystallize the general public opinion about his work. Most people are unable to determine and they are merely exasperated by them. To us they seem like the vivid expression of the energies of a versatile artist, and in their most extravagant form they illustrate the subtle remark of some critic who said, that the peril of those who worship nature is eccentricity. As a matter of fact the enchanting heads of women are as purely theoretical as the abstruse problems, bearing the same relation to these, that Picasso's recent realistic works do to the earlier cubistic experiments. Models are rarely used directly and they are not more natural than Nadelman's "Horse," or his amusing garden piece "Le Promeneur." On the other hand they are not sterile imitations of Greek originals, for, although Nadelman's art undoubtedly has something of the clear ring of the genuine antique, something of its universal beauty and divine repose, the artist himself is

not a neo-classicist. He is working as an ancient Greek must have done, with the inexhaustible universe, and not mere art, for an inspiration, and this distinguishes him from men like Thorwaldsen and Canova. Through his innate artistic feeling, incessant observation and unswerving continuity of studious effort, he has evolved rules and new ideals which compete with nature without copying her. Self-confidence and daring departures came only after many years of study, and therefore Nadelman's contention that his remotest abstractions are those closest to nature must be seriously weighed.

Nadelman's latest ambition seems to be to give artistic form and permanence to contemporary figures and costume. The gay maidens tripping like Greek nymphs along Fifth Avenue in their tight skirts, the lithe athletic woman dancing the tango in her masculine tailor-made gown and high-heeled pumps, the overconfident violin virtuoso, the temperamental chamber musicians, the stout coloratura soprano bursting with song, — these are the types which impress him. He claims that if a sober appreciation of their qualities were possible, they would already be recognized as classics in their genre, for when analysed, they reveal plastic features essentially the same as his beautiful "Reverie" now in the Detroit Museum. Sobriety however is hardly possible in the presence of these figures, and on the occasion of their recent appearance in a miscellaneous exhibition of sculptures, society women are said to have broken some



KNELLING DANCER
Bronze by Elie Nadelman

of them to pieces, so intense was the feeling aroused by these decently clad little people, among many pseudo-classical nudes. Visitors seemed surprised and shocked to see *la mode* treated plastically. Nadelman was laughed at when he insisted that these were *par excellence* the sculptures of our day and that the problems he attacked were just as serious as those handled by the Greeks. "One copies nature in vain," he cried. Divinity itself cannot create, let us say, a living hackney horse out of molten bronze, and it would be foolish for a mere artist to try. By carefully observing nature, however, a gifted mortal may produce a piece of sculpture which will suggest the sleekness, the almost idiotic pride, the nervous energy, the power and the absurdly high spirits of the living animal. A realistic bronze horse placed beside Nadelman's original creation will seem lifeless and dull. Men and women are studied and treated along the same lines. The laws of harmonious proportion in the construction of the draped human form, can of course be applied just as artistically to figures in skirts or trousers, as they once were to figures in togas. Certain lines of a tango dancer are just as beautifully balanced and as graceful in relation to each other, as the essential lines of a dancing faun or *Apoxyomenos*, and as soon as this is realized, the average amateur will be able to liberate his æsthetic faculties from old conventions. No one can quarrel with the soundness and logic of such theoretical arguments, but unfortunately the works which they

are intended to justify seem conceived in the spirit of caricature and not with the earnestness which one associates with Nadelman's animal forms, portraits, and ideal heads.

It is almost inevitable to compare every modern sculptor to Rodin, but Nadelman is so directly his antithesis that it is more logical to contrast him with the great Frenchman. A mere glance at Nadelman's work will naturally disclose the fact, that his ability to handle such a vast arabesque of human forms as the "Porte de l'Enfer" or the solution of such a problem of complicated ensemble as the "Calais Bourgeois," has not yet been tested. Nor does the younger artist's work begin to display Rodin's wealth of imagination. In comparing the smaller sculptures, however, the higher praise does not always fall to the lot of the older artist. The obvious difference here is the romantic emotionalism of Rodin as contrasted with Nadelman's intellectual calm or his purely decorative quality, and it is regrettable that his mahogany decorations in low relief, which adorn a New York residence, cannot be publicly shown. His work often suggests a mood of musical melancholy but we do not find here the quivering flesh, the ecstasy of desire, the grappling men and women, the insatiable longing and force of sex, which are always present in Rodin's palpitating figures. The creatures of Nadelman's fancy are indeed often strangely sexless. *Beauté plastique*, according to him, should not be a matter of emotion. A sculptor must never be sentimental

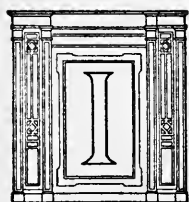


YOUNG DEER
Bronze by Elie Nadelman

or didactic. He may, indeed, arouse your feelings, — and Nadelman is often humorous and even witty on occasions, — but primarily, plastic art is not concerned with love or patriotism or kindred feelings, and you find accordingly that his loftiest conceptions are almost cold in their austerity and severe simplicity. Even some of the fine mahogany sculptures which have the advantage of rich color, lack the warmth of living flesh. Nadelman seems to put his keen intelligence and acquired Gallic taste, rather than native passion, into his work. His art savours at times of mathematical formulæ and, like the work of the great Belgian, George Minne, it is occasionally pure architecture in miniature. If, however, these are shortcomings, it is nevertheless refreshing to find a comparatively young man with such strong convictions, taking his position, in spite of Rodin's supremacy in the popular mind. The intellectual note and aloofness are intensified by the extraordinary high polish which he gives to his surfaces, and which, he claims, enables his works to acquire tone without dirt, after the manner of antique marbles. Furthermore, some of these heads, fixed forever in marble meditation, display a rare delicacy, a kind of mysterious spirituality, which forever disposes of those detractors who say he is an apostle of ugliness. Such works stamp him as a seeker of the ideal, a speculative, artistic intellect, in quest of things immaterial, whereas his animal forms, like the "Young Deer," "The Bull," the "Stags," the "Horse" and the lovely

“Swan Fountain,” are notable for their great force, directness, and plastic qualities. Until, however, he gives us some single, supreme incarnation of all his powers, it will not be possible to develop his admirers into champions, and his opponents into that effective asset, a hostile literary body.

EDMUND DULAC



F Edmund Dulac had had any voice in the matter he would have chosen some dream city of the Orient for his birthplace, a Persian princess for his mother and an artist of the Ming Dynasty for his father. These would have bestowed upon him racial instincts for the arts he loves best, and Dulac is always trying to convince himself and his friends that, although he is a naturalized Englishman, born in Toulouse, he is actually descended from those mysterious Saracens who overran the ancient centre of Languedoc, several centuries ago. Perhaps his theory is correct. It offers, at any rate, a simple explanation for the fact that besides being English and French, his art is of Persia, India, or China as the occasion demands, as well as for the cleverness with which he can seriously impersonate an oriental gentleman, and for the uncanny way in which his pet chow and Siamese cat understand him.

Dulac does not recall a time when he did not paint, and although he began, like the immortal

Aubrey Beardsley, as a musician, his holidays were spent copying Japanese prints which he first saw in a collection brought to Toulouse from the East, by a cultivated merchant. Stage fright at an annual conservatory examination ended his musical career and then, conforming to his family's wishes, he began the study of law at the university. Art, however, meant more to him than codes or pandects, and in 1901, when he was nineteen years old, he decided to become a painter.

The school in which he began his studies was badly organized, and the pupils were left more or less to themselves. Dulac won all the school prizes, and a municipal scholarship, which though never paid, served as an excuse for going to Paris in 1903. Arriving at the capital, he was enrolled for six months at the Julian Academy, but he actually studied there for only three or four weeks. Like most of the students he was obliged to earn his living, and he began his professional career as an artist by making covers and magazine illustrations. England was the most lucrative field for such work, and Dulac drifted to London, where in 1907 a group of his water-color drawings were used to illustrate the *Arabian Nights*. The instantaneous success of this book led to further orders, and ever since he has been delighting us each year with a new sheaf of works, remarkable for their beauty of composition, delicacy of clear, limpid color, and conciseness of drawing.

Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the *Rubaiyat*, the *Sleep-*



WATER COLOR DRAWING FOR "THE CHESTNUT HORSE"
(A Russian Fairy Tale)
By Edmund Dulac

ing Beauty, the Tales of Poe and Hans Christian Anderson, Princess Badoura and Sinbad are the principal works down to 1915. At first, Rackham was his rival, one indeed, whose drawing seemed to have a more personal inspiration. Dulac's talents, however, developed very rapidly. He soon showed distinctive originality, and the debt which he owed to the English artist soon became negligible. Dulac had from the very beginning fine imaginative powers, and each group of drawings disclosed greater technical achievements and an unsurpassed versatility. The daintiest draughtsmanship, a delicious humor, an amazing feeling for design, and a positive genius for rich radiant color as applied to the pages of a book, were all coupled with the power to grasp an author's meaning, and to embody it most happily with the glamor or piquancy which pertained to the various literary works themselves. Indeed, he has frequently added a vein of high poetry to the poetic originals. He should, however, be regarded not as an illustrator, but as an original painter, who uses line merely as an accessory, and each of these little iridescent miniatures which seem to be made of opal dust on mother of pearl, satisfies the demand which Delacroix made upon all paintings, — they are color feasts for the eye.

It may have been his friendship with the celebrated connoisseurs Ricketts and Shannon, that led Dulac to a renewed and closer acquaintance with those Oriental and Greek primitives, which

he had already learned to love in his youth, and during the last few years, he has been steeping himself in Eastern art and folk lore. These studies removed any obstacles to his further development that may have existed. Persian miniatures especially have fascinated him, and it will be noticed that he has discarded all attempts at modelling by means of shading, and has wisely adopted the eastern convention of flat colors. We can recall only one other artist, Marcus Behmer, who can enter into so complete a sympathy with oriental subjects, and "Marcotino" as the German artist is known, does not possess Dulac's flair for superb color. After all, the fantasies which Scheherazade wove for her august lord beside the scented fountains, need a jeweled commentator, and Dulac alone possesses the necessary gifts. The tremendous advance which his art has recently made becomes obvious, if we compare the early paintings for, let us say Poe's Tales, with the more recent plates in his Red Cross gift book. "The development should have been even more rapid," Dulac tells us, "but all the drawings for a particular book must be more or less in the same spirit and at the same level, and the nature of such work does not allow progress to go beyond the step forward made with the first illustration of a series." In the "Fairy Book of the Allies" (1916), however, each story means a new racial tradition and a wholly different inspiration, and the result is a unique commentary on the artist's resourceful-



WATER COLOR DRAWING FOR "THE FRIAR AND THE BOY"
(An English Fairy Tale)
By Edmund Dulac

ness and wonderful power of assimilation. In each painting he magically develops what appears superficially to be a new style, peculiarly appropriate to the nationality of the particular story, but ever remaining Dulac's own. It would be too much to expect to find him guiltless of the charge of borrowing, but the critics who are not satisfied unless they are tracing influences, will be faced here by a novel problem. Surely no other artist has, within the limits of a single volume, exhausted not only the hues of the rainbow, but so many regions of the earth. Japan's rhythm and refinement, Servia's barbaric patterns, the white snows and passionate ringing colors of Russia, French grace, languorous Italian beauty, Belgian quaintness, and wholesome English charm are all to be found here. His surfaces are like choice old ivory, and everywhere we come upon those superb azure tonalities, heavenly blue skies and reflecting waters, which a wit has described as "bleu du lac."

The production of the delightful works partially enumerated above has, however, not satisfied Dulac's ambition, and he has found time to wander in other alluring fields. At present he is making patriotic posters and he recently made excellent cartoons for Gobelin tapestries, which were sympathetically executed by Leo Belmonte, while his caricatures and little statuettes furnished London with its most amusing sensation. In one of these caricatures Orpen is seen looking through a telescope to find Glyn Philpot, "a new

star rising in the sky," — and some one pointed out that Dulac might well have substituted his own portrait for Philpot's and have Max Beer-bohm occupying Orpen's place. Max has hitherto been the only begetter of such chefs-d'œuvres but he will now have to look to his laurels. It is quite true that no master can equal Max's "Tennyson reading his verses to Queen Victoria," or write essays like "More." Such masterpieces have justly earned him a claim to inimitability, but Dulac, though only a newcomer in the field, has already won rare triumphs. We are credibly informed that when Her Majesty, Queen Mary, first came upon the little figurine of Sir Claude Phillips, not only her gravity, but that of her dignified ladies in waiting, was for an appreciable space of time seriously upset. It is our national misfortune, that Charles Ricketts, the owner of this priceless possession, would not permit it, or its companion, "Mrs. Gibson the collector of Conder fans," to run submarine risks. For the time being, therefore, they fittingly repose among the Greek marbles, Leonardos, Rodins, Watteaus and Daumiers, in the famous studio on Lansdowne Road. Mr. Edmund Davis, who has enriched the Luxembourg with a splendid collection of modern English art, is another fortunate collector. He owns an entire group of drawings and caricatures, among which the most notable are, "Mestrovic carving the colossal toe of some Serbian Hero," and "Ricketts-and-Shannon," — the heavenly twins, as Robert Ross calls them,

— in which Dulac has so cleverly mingled the spirit of Indian Art and English humor. We must not be ungrateful, however, for we have a drawing of the late Lord Kitchener showing his passion for blue china, and the unapproachable Sargent in Belgravia, among other good caricatures. All of these are done from memory, and the same is virtually true of such serious portraits as that of the Japanese actor Mr. Michio Itow, and Madame A.

Stage settings and costumes constitute still another departure. Dulac began by creating some fantastic rococo designs for Beecham's production of Bach's "Phœbus and Pan," in which the chorus was garbed in 18th century style, whereas the principals, remarkable for their bizarre coiffures, appeared in pseudo-classical costumes. This artistic diversion was followed by the setting for Maud Allan of an Egyptian legend entitled "Khamma," written by the gifted dancer and W. L. Courtney of the *Fortnightly Review*, with music for an orchestra of ninety men by Claude Debussy, who has since collaborated in a similar way with Bakst. Finally he has designed a series of masks, settings and costumes for William Butler Yeats' symbolical play, entitled "At the Hawk's Well" or "Waters of Immortality," a poetical drama, modelled upon the Noh stage tradition of aristocratic Japan. The properties devised by Dulac are so simple that the actors can carry them about in a cab, and perform during their leisure hours in any drawing room. Mr.

Yeats, in his preface, tells us what a stirring adventure it would be "for a poet and an artist working together to create once more heroic or grotesque types, that keeping always an appropriate distance from life, would seem images of those profound emotions that exist only in solitude and in silence." It would seem that in Dulac he found an artist who could not only enter into the spirit of his poetry, but who was moreover familiar with the ancient theatrical traditions of the Romans, and of those consummate Japanese masters who hundreds of years ago moulded masks for various types of tragic character. "What could be more suitable," asks the poet, "than that Cuchulain, let us say, a half supernatural, legendary person should show to us a face, not made before the looking glass by some leading player, — there too we have many quarrels, — but moulded by some distinguished artist?" How well Dulac had done his share of the work we could judge by two of his beautiful masks in his first American exhibition, and it is to be hoped that since Michio Itow, the leading actor in the original cast is now in the United States, performances of the play itself may be made possible.¹ Dulac's costumes will then be seen, and it will clearly be realized how swiftly, both in his work for the theatre and in the exquisite paintings, he is arriving at one of his artistic

¹ The play was given an interesting performance at the Greenwich Village Theatre in June, 1918. Itow and his dancers acted the play, while other performers recited the lines.

goals, — “a satisfactory synthesis for the communication of Emotion through Character.” Another aim seems to be, to prove his capacity to excel in many media, and he has already done various things so successfully and poetically, that if he were to return to his native city, the judges of the famous Languedoc Floral Games, which take place in Toulouse each Spring and in which only poets contend, would surely award the sprig of golden amaranth to Edmund Dulac.

KAY NIELSEN



OR the many disappointments suffered on a trip to Copenhagen, the only compensation offered was a memorable visit to the brilliant Madame Paul Gauguin, — not Te-hura of Tahiti, but his lawful European widow, who talked amazingly of her eccentric husband, while puffing away at strong black cigars. Even she, however, could give us only second-hand information about the Nielsen family, to meet whom we had made the trip to the Danish capital. Madame Oda Nielsen of the Royal Theatre had just finished her annual engagement, the Dagmar Theatre owned and artistically managed by Prof. Martinius Nielsen was closed for the season, and Kay Nielsen, their gifted son, was in London, his beloved adopted city, where his first exhibition had gained him fame and honor in one Byronic night.

Unlike his grand-uncle, Prof. Rasmus Nielsen, who began as an artist and ended by becoming a celebrated physician, the young man had given up a medical career and studied art in Paris from 1904 to 1912 under Jean Paul Laurens, Lucien



THE WAR LORD
Water Color Drawing by Kay Nielsen
Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Templeton Crocker

Simon, his countryman Christian Krogh, and other conventional teachers. His environment from early childhood favored a rapid artistic development. His elders had often jestingly referred to him as the "little philosopher of the pencil," and the originality of his intellect was soon recognized alike by masters and comrades in the Latin Quarter. He was wisely advised to abandon more ambitious, tedious fields, and cultivate his special gifts, and we find his originality disclosed in the charming, early, autobiographical pen-and-ink drawings, known as "The Book of Death." Their appeal to those of us who have lived a bohemian life, is immediate. They breathe the sentiment of youth at its flowering moment. Here are the tears behind the smiles of Pierrot, his region of joyous dreams, his dead hopes and bitter loneliness, and the fragrant rose leaves strewn on the tomb of dead love. All the romantic confessions with which Murger has made us familiar, are treated with a graceful, vigorous, graphic style which London at once recognized and applauded. The unapproachable greatness of Aubrey Beardsley, the splendors of Dulac and Parrish, or the distinct personal charm of Rackham, did not interfere with his success in any way, for all the critics realized that Nielsen's talents were original and of a very unusual kind. The incisive line was his own, and his fairyland less sombre than Rackham's. The extremely delicate and transparent color left the drawing to take its part as a graceful woven pattern more clearly

than in a drawing by Dulac. He seemed from the very beginning to be able to make an author's single phrase the pretext for delightful landscape vistas and visions of delicate beauty. Swathed in amusing fripperies, his elusive princesses, so diaphanous and light and dignified, and so far removed from the common level of mankind, are drawn in just the right spirit, — not a single element of comedy or pathos in their fragile lives having been missed. Their singular daintiness, and their artificial but attractive grace, are in astounding contrast with such a drawing as "Shadows of Night." Here Nielsen vindicates his right to be deemed an imaginative draughtsman of a rare order in the realm of sinister mystery and of the macabre. The drawings in a similar vein of our own Herbert Crowley are the only works we can think of by a living man, whose technique and power can be compared with Nielsen's and it will be interesting to follow his incursions into the field of satirical caricature where he is rigorous in the suppression of certain details. Several examples inspired by the Great War are powerful, and impressive, although he does not indulge in the magnificent hatreds of Raemaekers. Nielsen's designs ordered by the Royal Theatre at Copenhagen, for the classical Danish dramatic Fantasy "Aladdin" by Adam Oehlenschlaeger, and some interesting etchings now publicly shown for the first time, are further evidences of his versatility and restless artistic temperament. Occasionally in such a touching drawing as the one which

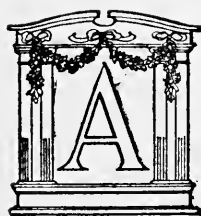


WATER COLOR DRAWING FOR
"EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON"
By Kay Nielsen

shows him as Pierrot hovering over Venice with a message of condolence to the etcher Albany Howarth, he still reverts to his earlier lyrical strain. We love him best, however, as the illustrator of Hans Christian Anderson's Tales, for in these the gifts which made him a cosmopolitan favorite and celebrity are most obvious. He handles with great skill the author's most delicious impertinences. The wistful melancholy figures, which recall Heine's bitter-sweet philosophy, are bordered by fascinating filigree work, and the exquisite accessories and embroideries merely accentuate the refinement and subtle beauty of the central figures. Where a native Scandinavian accent is coupled with his naïveté and quaint humour, as in the drawings for "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," Nielsen is inimitable. His most intricate inventions never seem laboured. Controlled in a measure by Norse ornamental traditions, he reaches an absolute equality with the poetical text, and it is a genuine pleasure to reach the oasis of a Kay Nielsen picture in a journey through the printed pages of the book. Sometimes the designs come into existence through all manner of borrowings, the spoils of many altars. Not infrequently he forces the note of the grotesque, or indulges too freely in amusing anachronisms and to this day there are details, like the dripping candles and drifting spangles, which have the Beardsley or the Conder savour. At the same time, he has mounted so freely and easily into a realm entirely his own that we can

enthusiastically join the London and continental throngs which have long since surrendered to the intensity of conviction which we feel in these small works.

ALBERT STERNER



ALBERT STERNER'S life would lead us to expect his art to be cosmopolitan. He is an American citizen, born in London in 1863 and educated at King Edward's school in Birmingham, where Burne-Jones had been a pupil. He has lived for several years at a time in Munich, Chicago, Paris, and New York. He is extremely versatile socially and artistically, and on seeing a collection of his work which displays the full measure of his ability, it is difficult to believe that one artist created it all. Sincerity, fine sentiment, an almost unique emotional quality, delicacy of line, and a happy mingling of subtlety and directness are the chief characteristics of his art.

For a long time he was the victim of his international fame as one of the foremost living illustrators. The American reading public had been admiring his drawings in books like Curtis's "Prue and I," Poe's "Tales," and Mrs. Ward's novels for so long a time, that it refused to associate his name with any other form of artistic

endeavor, and it took Sterner many years to effectually live down this fine reputation as an illustrator and free himself from the bond of the story-book. And yet when Sterner was still a very young man, he had already done admirable work in all media, save only the various forms of etching and engraving. Delightful lithographs, interesting oil-paintings and pastels, sanguines and monotypes, stage settings and stained glass are included among his works.

As is the case with many artists of a high order of merit, Sterner turns to the nude to find the best theme for the embodiment of his powers. The truth and vigor of these studies are noteworthy, and they serve as a conclusive answer to the occasional charge of mawkish sentimentality. They express the entire gamut of moods, — gaiety, mystery, abandonment, romance, grace of movement, pathos, sensuality, violence, brutality even. What is equally important, they arouse emotions and stir the imagination. Their beauty is haunting. The best of them need not fear comparison with those of Zorn who admires them. In each a certain note is sought for, and when that is found all further details are carelessly suggested or entirely sacrificed. These studies represent all his experiments and problems. That means a great deal in Sterner's case, for he is never satisfied with imitating what a successful competitor or predecessor has accomplished. His pencil portraits have long been famous and now he is enthusiastically attacking difficult questions in color.

Oakes Ames
and his family



PORTRAIT OF OAKES AMES
Pencil Drawing by Albert Sterner

With his portraits in oil we are not especially concerned, but it may be noted that as far back as 1891 his "Bachelor" received an honorable mention in Paris, and in 1905 a life-size portrait of his son Harold, standing beside a wolfhound, received a gold medal at Munich. One is tempted also to linger and enthuse over his fine tempera painting of Mrs. Sterner, who has so often served as an inspiration for his graceful figures. Recently he has completed some delightful pastels breathing a wholesome, modern spirit. Admirable as these efforts are, however, they do not altogether satisfy Sterner's restless artistic nature.

The monotype, a medium full of amusing possibilities and surprises, is one of his favorite relaxations. Roughly speaking, the process is the exact reverse of painting on canvas. A polished zinc plate is covered with a fairly even ground of oil-paint, which is then gradually removed or added to with clean brushes, rags, fingers, or stumps, as the case may be, and when the work is finished and the paint is still fresh, it is printed on a moistened sheet of Japan paper by passing through a press. It is a fluid medium, puts almost no restraint on the artist, and only long practice will enable him to realize in advance what the ultimate effect after printing will be. The monotypist must possess dexterity, a fine sense for masses, and his touch must be sure and broad in order to handle the medium successfully. The element of accident should play as little part in the creation of the finished work as it does in

an etching. It is a very flexible process, for any changes can be made before printing, but care must be taken to print the pictures when the oil-paint is of the right consistency. It is quite extraordinary what charming results, and what a variety of effects are obtainable. The pure monotype should not be retouched, but Degas, and the American etcher Ernest Haskell often used pastel in connection with the oil paint, after the latter dried on the paper. Besides the artists just mentioned, the late Louis Loeb, Sir Hubert von Herkomer, Augustus Koopman, Ernest Peixotto, and others have made experiments with this medium. Only one impression can, of course, be made from each plate, and the prints are therefore unique. It can be easily understood that such an unconventional medium would exert a strong fascination on a talent like Sterner's, and we hope that he may be tempted to continue to produce these unique works. It is still more important however that he should be encouraged to stimulate us with his fine lithographs.

The fact that Sterner should in the midst of a lifelong fight with prudishness and commercialism, lay aside his lucrative pastels and paint-brushes and set up a private press, to refresh himself by adding to his already creditable list of lithographs, is one of the most pleasing incidents in the history of contemporary American art, for it must be regretfully admitted that in spite of the existence of masterpieces by Whistler, Fantin-Latour, Menzel, Gavarni, Daumier, Goya, Legros and others, this most spontaneous and personal form of ar-

tistic expression does not enjoy the commercial popularity that it deserves.

Albert Sterner has been engaged with lithography for almost twenty years, and when he began his experiments, he had the good fortune to have the advice and assistance of that excellent printer Lemercier, in Paris. His earliest successes, however, were gained in Munich, and the manner in which he sold his first prints is worth retelling. Shortly after Sterner settled in the Bavarian capital, the attention of the director of the Kupferstich Kabinet was attracted by some lithographs in the window of Littauer's fascinating shop on Odeons Platz. One was a seated boy, treated with such loving sympathy that one could safely conclude it must be the artist's child. Another was a silvery print of an invalid. The third was a crisp, brilliantly drawn figure of an old-fashioned girl, with her hair in ringlets. The discriminating director went into the shop and bought them all for his gallery, without ever having heard of the artist who created them. In the same way, solely on the strength of their rare merits, Sterner's lithographs found their way into the collection of the Dresden Gallery and into the fine private collection of the King of Italy. A considerable number of prints were made in Munich, but his success in other channels obliged him to neglect the lithographic stone as a medium, and it was not until 1912, after a successful exhibition in New York, that lithography again engaged his energies. The pe-

culiar problems, resources, and spirit of the medium, were exactly suited to his impetuous, ardent temperament, and to his manual dexterity. It is in these lyrics on stone that he speaks his own language, and even a superficial examination of his *œuvre* discloses a man who possesses an original point of view and an unique personal vision. Sterner is not an artist who is satisfied with that successful but uninspired uniformity, which is the curse of so many American artists. We have seen him take up his lithographic transfer paper and without any preparation, like a true creator in a fine frenzy, draw a portrait, which was not merely faithful, but a poignant reading of character. In 1913, one year after his exhibition, he set up the "Maryholme Press" and began a series of nudes which are like musical phrases, symbols of deeply felt emotions. At that time he became acquainted with the charming lithographs of Charles Conder, the gifted Englishman, and henceforth he printed many of his subjects in sanguine. Not all of these studies were printed at his studio, however, for Sterner, like every successful portraitist, is obliged to travel a great deal, and following the example of Whistler, he sought the services of sympathetic and skillful printers. Such men he found in Messrs. Gregor and Leinroth of the Ketterlinus Lithographic Company in Philadelphia, who had done successful work for Pennell. They furnish fine stones on which Sterner is free to draw or to make lithotints, or they transfer his drawings deftly from paper to the stone. In the case of that beautiful print



THE STRANGER
A Lithograph by Albert Sterner

entitled *Baiser d'un Ange*, the new offset process was used, and the figures face the same way in the print as they did on the stone. The printing of these lithographs is done under the artist's supervision, and that elusive quality known as personal touch is always present. If the print be a large one, it is more difficult to retain this quality of the original, but Sterner has been remarkably successful in preserving it, even in so large a lithograph as his lovely *Dame am Wasser*, printed in two tones. He realizes moreover that deterioration takes place if too many proofs are pulled from a stone, and he wisely prints the whole edition of a lithograph at once. If this is not done the delicate tones have a tendency to grow fainter, and as Mr. T. R. Way correctly says, in speaking of Whistler's old stones, "the stronger parts are apt to become overstrong, in the printer's effort to recover the weaker."

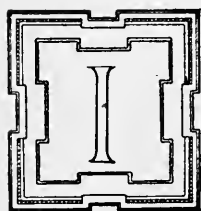
Up to the year 1916, Sterner has executed about fifty lithographs, but many of these are merely in the nature of experiments, — eloquent testimony of his determination to master the art completely. There are lithotints and drawings on zinc as well as on paper and stone, and he has experimented with various inks and toned papers. Just now he is making a fine series of patriotic posters for the government. The slightest among the prints can at once be distinguished, for they all possess Sterner's characteristic lyric grace, a quality which reaches its highest level in the celebrated *Amour Mort*. The artist can be vigorous as well,

and he is equally at home in nude, genre, or landscape subjects. What splendid draftsmanship in the backs of the men in the *Mussel Openers*! What dash and rugged power in the portrait of the sculptor Quinn! How thrilling the blacks in *Finale* and what fine tonal effects in *L'Ame Malade*! One is tempted to linger over the versatility these display, and the range of their appeal. Surely prints which reveal such unchallenged gifts will put an end to the collector's unaccountable apathy, and encourage Sterner and other artists like George Bellows, to add new items to the catalogue of their works.

ROBERT FREDERICK BLUM

Born in Cincinnati, July 9, 1857.

Died at New York, June 8, 1903.



IN an unpublished letter to a friend who was about to enter an art school, Robert Blum wrote in a vein that is fashionable at this moment. "You know what I think of schools generally — they prove disastrous to the majority. I have come to look on them as I do on the schools where Spencerian penmanship is taught, — where you put up each letter in curl papers before you are expected to write a word. Good pictures are the best lessons you can get. My God! When I think of the few things I hugged to my heart and branded on my brain in those dark days when I was struggling with appalling ignorance! Two pictures, — a *Fortuny* and a *Boldini* at an exhibition in Cincinnati, and which I saw probably three times, — the volume of *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in which cartoons of *Baudry's* work were reproduced, and which I was too timid to go to see more often than once in two weeks, — is all I can remember of cheering and helping me in that dreadful period of my life. They spoke to me in a way that other canvases

failed, and without knowing it then, I now realize that it was because they lacked that certain conventionality of picture-making so apparent in all pictures. No sir! I can't help thinking that there is a great deal of nonsense in schools, — you are bound to come finally to the point of fighting out things for yourself and by yourself. Why, then, not from the beginning by looking and searching out the lessons that any good picture contains, instead of having to do it after three or four years' schooling."

This extract, quoted because it throws light on his career, is from one of his Japanese letters written in March, 1891. He was then in his thirty-fourth year, and he recalls with bitterness his boyhood days in Cincinnati, where his training began in a lithographic establishment. The experience gained there may have lent that touch of lightness which is essential for drawing on stone, and which characterizes his superb pastels. He attended the McMicken Art School of Design in his native city, and later, in 1876, he was a pupil of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. For all practical purposes, however, Blum was an "auto-didakt," as one might infer from the above quotation. After Philadelphia, with its International Exposition, Cincinnati became impossible. He came to New York City in 1879, and his original talent was warmly encouraged by Alexander W. Drake, in those days the art editor of Scribner's Magazine. In 1880 he was enabled to make the first of many



A GEISHA
Water Color by Robert Blum
The Cincinnati Museum Association

annual European tours, and he revelled in the beauties of Venice, Madrid, Toledo, and Seville. His great friend and companion on many of these journeys was William M. Chase, whom he had met in the charming Gerson home, and Miss Roof's biography of Chase is full of anecdotes of their life-long friendship, of which the Chase portrait in the Cincinnati Museum is a permanent souvenir. In 1881 they helped to decorate a cabin on the *Belgenland*, and in the following year they were among the organizers of the Society of Painters in Pastel, of which Blum became president. Holland was visited in 1889, and in the same year "The Venetian Lace Makers," also owned by the Cincinnati Museum, was exhibited at the Exposition Universelle and was crowned with a medal. The great dream of his life was realized on June 6, 1890, when he landed in Japan to carry out a commission to illustrate Sir Edwin Arnold's "Japonica." He was elected a member of the National Academy of Design in 1892, after the exhibition of "The Ameya," now hanging in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The "Letters from Japan" appeared in *Scribner's* in 1893. His most famous works, the two friezes in old Mendelssohn's house, were finished in 1898, and at the time of his death he was at work with A. B. Wenzell on a decorative scheme for a new Amsterdam Theater.

These are the outlines of a materially successful and apparently happy life. But to

his intimate and devoted friends, Robert Blum's secluded career was a romance, with illness and suffering hanging like a great shadow over him, and the sensitive artist's dissatisfaction with even his finest achievements accentuating the pathos. His was a shy, affectionate, boyish nature, playful and humorous, and it was with children that he felt most at home. He could only boast amusingly of being a godfather, for he never married, and in the midst of a voluminous correspondence he found time to make extended inquiries about the little Roberts and Robertinas named after him by admiring parents. How he would have loved the forest scene in Barrie's "Dear Brutus!" He was never too busy to construct a balloon or draw caricatures for the Bacher and Chase children, and the enormous kite which he built and decorated while at sea on one of his European voyages while in Chase's company is still remembered by those on board. He entered into everything he did, — work or play, — with an intensity and enthusiasm which the Greeks appropriately called divine. When the Mendelssohn Hall friezes were being executed he was not satisfied with merely making innumerable studies from life, he modeled each of the figures and then shifted them about endlessly on an architectural setting before he could arrive at a final satisfactory decision. The same conscientious care was given to the decorations in Japanese style of his beautiful home in Grove Street, to the details of a magazine article, or to

the reproduction of a wash drawing. Reams of paper contain his minute instructions to the printers and process men who reproduced his letters from Japan. Small wonder that his instructions were religiously followed. He won their hearts with a genial humor which kept cropping out while he laboriously explained details to them. After describing, for instance, how the "Begging Priest" (Sir Edwin Arnold's "Japonica") was to be reproduced, he added: "Had him here all day, and after getting through with the drawing he was asked to pray for the safe arrival of the picture in New York, which he did fervently and long . . . only I would ask as a favor, to cable the word *yes* when the drawings do reach you."

From the very beginning, when Blum's Coney Island drawings were appearing in 1879, something definite and complete was recognized in their quality. His best pencil drawings, delicate, deft and gemlike in their sharpness, were justly regarded as masterly. Every random stroke disclosed the artist. His admiration for the brilliant Spanish-French school, however, blinded many to the original and personal note in his work. "Blumtuny," he was chaffingly called. It is still pointed out that some of his scintillating Venetian canvases may pardonably be mistaken for those of his next door neighbor Rico. Blum, however, was no slavish imitator. The virtuosity, freshness, and lively charm of the men he admired showed the young American what he was after, and he wisely accepted their accom-

plishment and tried to go further. At first he hoped that Japan would teach him the final lessons, but he soon saw his mistake. He signed his drawings with one or another of his various "jitsuin," but he never became as Japanese as Emil Orlik, the gifted Bohemian artist who was recently at work in the land of the cherry blossom. Blum undervalued everything he did, and his discontent is echoed in all his letters. "I have got away," he writes, "from being satisfied as I once was with merely the impression of a thing, and the worst of it is, I am no more satisfied with the result of what I am now doing." Originality was to come from within, and though Japan never taught him her greatest lessons, she nevertheless gave him an opportunity to find himself in his pastels. These beautiful interpretations of the land he visited are very true and personal, and it is well to restore such works to the public consciousness at a time when we are in danger of forgetting that beauty and art existed before Gauguin, Van Gogh, or Cézanne. Blum had made original pastel sketches in Holland, he had copied the inimitable works of Degas, and the influence of Whistler, with whom he was intimate in Venice, cannot be ignored. The two Americans went swimming and sketching together and used to take their coffee at Florian's, but Blum's originality was only slightly effected. It may safely be claimed that his Japanese pastels were never excelled, if judged purely from the technical point of view — that is to say, from the way in which



Moods of Music
Oil Study for the Mendelssohn Hall Decoration by Robert Blum
The Cincinnati Museum Association

the medium is handled. With his little sticks of color he could make the flesh of a Geisha as silken as if he were using the precious oils of Bague; he could breathe, so to speak, on the tinted paper as gracefully and as delicately as Conder had done on ivory-colored silk; and he had the great Butterfly's taste and essential skill. Unexpected vivacious notes of brilliant intensity sparkle like jewels which are always magically placed, and the best of these works can be soberly described as delicious. A story is told which illustrates this quality. Once, when Blum was at work in the old Sherwood studios which he decorated with strutting peacocks, Oscar Wilde, then at the height of his celebrity, walked in and watched the progress of the artist. "Blum," he remarked, "your exquisite pastels give me the sensation of eating yellow satin." The brilliant æsthete would have felt flattered had he known that the Japanese who saw Blum at work had experienced virtually the same original sensation. The artist tells about it in a long and intensely interesting letter to his friend Jules Turcas, where he describes a day of his routine life in the little house on "Being in Possession of Pleasure" Street in Tokio. Crowds used to collect while Blum made pastels in the open air. "After a long survey of both me and the work," he wrote, "I will hear them say, 'My!' or 'Oh! My!' It puzzled me at first, till Miake told me it was a term they use in admiration of a poem, picture, etc., and meant literally 'good enough to eat!'"

Blum's handling of paint was not equally successful. In the first place his technique was too strongly reminiscent of the crisp flashing style of the Frenchmen and Spaniards whom we have already mentioned. Not infrequently a certain tightness which he disliked would creep into his finished canvases. The reason is not hard to discover. The artist disliked the medium. "Nasty," was the word he used, and a large painting was regarded by him as a piece of expensive oil-cloth. Nevertheless, if they will not rank with the best of his wonderful water-colors and pastels, the "Ameya" and the paintings once owned by Blum's devoted friend and patron, Alfred Corning Clark, are achievements worthy of respect.

Old Mendelssohn Hall, which, alas, had to be demolished to make way for a sky-scraper, contained the works which most people know best, and it is to be hoped that the two friezes will find a permanent and appropriate resting-place. Their importance in the history of American mural decoration can certainly not be over-estimated. These great canvases display the patience, character, and talent of the man and much of his genius. He had studied his problem carefully, and his solution was eminently successful in many ways. It is extraordinary that the note of joy should predominate in the work and life of a man who suffered such acute physical pain. His compositions are musical and rhythmical in feeling, but the thrill of his smaller things is absent. His

taste was perhaps too delicate and reserved for work on such a colossal scale. The lovely colors seem almost evanescent, and the charming freedom of the studies was often lost when the ultimate form of the first improvisation was determined upon or elaborated. Many of the single figures, however, possess tender idyllic grace and buoyancy and reflect the charm of their creator as nothing else does, except his correspondence.

In his charming letters to a host of friends we come most closely into touch with his rarely beautiful traits of character. He seems to have been a consistent idealist, with nothing mean in his make-up. When clever caricatures embellish the letters you know instinctively that they are humorous little sketches inspired merely by a genial, witty nature. Friends bound him to his art and to his life, and when the short span allotted to him threatened to snap, it was the friends he would leave behind that he most thought of. In far-off Japan he would sit alone before his kerosene stove with Merry, his cat, on his lap, and talk to her, as old Sylvester Bonnard did to Hamilcar, about the distant loved ones, Chasey (Chase), Twatty (Twachtmann), and especially about "Alf (Alfred Corning Clark), the dear good fellow," who was "always doing things that go right plumb to the bottom of a fellow's heart!" His friends always feared that the curtain of death would fall prematurely, and it did. There was hardly time to bid him "Sayonara."

Gelebt, — gestrebt,
Gerungen, — bezwungen,
Gestorben, — umworben.

That is the epitaph he would have chosen, —
and perhaps it will some day be engraved on
the monument which Robert Blum's admirers
hope will be raised to his memory.

JULES PASCIN



ONLY the wisest among Americans in Paris ever found their way to the Café du Dôme, and accordingly it is not surprising to find that Jules Pascin, the most distinguished artist in the group of young men that met there, was until recently not known to our dilettants. Moreover he is a man who works to please himself and produces the kind of art that arouses the indignation of the bourgeoisie the world over. It was therefore an embarrassing relief for him to find that when he came suddenly upon us, — charmingly simple and unheralded, — the contents of his portfolio moved Henry McBride to exclaim, with a profound enthusiasm not at all characteristic of him, that as far as modern art is concerned, nothing of greater importance may happen throughout a season than an exhibition of this artist's work.

Pascin himself is modest about his achievements, and we regret that he has not brought along some of his more pretentious oil paintings which were among the memorable things at the annual exhibitions of the Berlin Secession. Es-

entially, however, his is an intimate art which can be appreciated better in a private study than in a public gallery, and he is very fairly represented by such drawings as were first seen here in the International Exhibition of Modern Art, and the Exhibition of Austro-Hungarian Graphic Art (1913).

He was born on March 31, 1885, at Widdin, Bulgaria, but his youth was spent in Vienna. Artistically a self-taught man, the first really stimulating impulse was an exhibition of French Impressionists. Lautrec and Renoir have remained among his favorite artists ever since. Before he became a professional painter, however, he spent some time at Bucharest with his father, who was a grain merchant. Today Pascin is grateful for this business experience, because it liberated him from the influence of schools and brought him into contact with the every-day life of the people. Eventually his witty drawings came to the notice of the watchful editor of "Simplicissimus," and their instant success in that weekly enabled him in 1905 to go to Paris, where he resided until 1914.

Before the war Pascin was one of a group of foreigners, — Nils von Dardel, Rudolph Grossman, Ernesto de Fiori, Hermann Haller, and others, — who sipped their coffee or liqueur on the corner of the Boulevards Raspail and Montparnasse, while discussing the importance of a Henri Rousseau or Picasso. They were just starting to exhibit as a group known as the "Dôme" when the



WATER COLOR DRAWING
By Jules Pascin

great war scattered them to every corner of Europe, and they may never meet again. Their art, which has almost no quality in common, has merits which are popularly recognized only after years of propaganda. Indeed, Pascin's work offers the worst kind of a stumbling block to the layman, for he chooses types which, while familiar to, are never mentioned by polite society. The wings of his blasé cupids are stained with the mud of the gutter, and his insolent chauffeurs, monstrous women, deformed criminals, emaciated, vicious children, uncanny animals, and careless inmates of the harem, call to mind Kraft Ebing's or Otto Weininger's unpleasant theories, and encourage the very pernicious habit of raising moral issues which theoretically have nothing to do with an honest attempt to analyze the artistic values of a painting or a piece of sculpture. If Degas is permitted to go behind the stage curtain, and among scrubwomen for his inspiration, Pascin's subject matter is his own affair, and it may be argued that we ought to feel grateful to him for discovering so much beauty in ugliness. These drawings, therefore, should be judged merely as the works of a piercing observer, an artist who gives intense vitality to everything he touches and who is a strange mixture of naïveté and extreme sophistication. Almost daily, Pascin makes studies from life, which may be recognized by their violet color, and his compositions, while not transcripts from nature, call into existence a hitherto unexpressed type of woman. The first

fruits of his sojourn in the Southern States and among the negroes of the West Indies were also very diverting. Already he is following in the footsteps of Lafcadio Hearn, and is discovering for himself the peculiar beauties of various types of ebon-hued Americans. The delicious humor which crops out with almost every stroke of his pen has found rare material here, and the tropical landscapes of Cuba and Florida revealed the meaning of warm color to him.

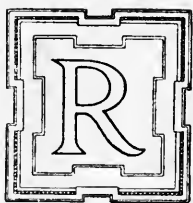
Like so much of the work of Forain, Beardsley, Lautrec, and Rops, the drawings of Pascin are often superficially perverse, but really they are powerful satirical caricatures. Invariably, too, we find a Gallic charm which has been traced by his German admirers to Watteau. This lyric grace is present in everything he attempts, even when he is stirred by Cubism and Primitivism, but he is not gallant or piquant in the elegant and comparatively innocent eighteenth-century sense. His drawings are at times the last word in erotic raffinement. Frank Crowninshield has quoted him as saying that he frequents the lupanar, because it is the only unconventional place left in our uncivilized world. One of his little dishevelled dolls, thrown carelessly on a chaise longue, can be as abandoned and suggestive as Beardsley's Messaline, and he would have been the ideal decorator for la maison de la Comtesse Gourdan. His colors are those of fading orchids, and at times they are as exquisite and delicate as the bloom on a Conder panel. His vision is fresh and intense, like a



CUBAN DRAWINGS
By Jules Pascin

child's, and he cultivates an apparent immaturity, which should not be confounded with lack of power. Some of the expressive sketches by old masters strike the same peculiar note, and that may account for the ardent enthusiasm which artist collectors like Max Klinger and Emil Orlik evince for these drawings, and also for the annoyance of those who are mystified by the use which Pascin has made of his rare competence.

ALFRED STEVENS



ARELY has a painter had the good fortune to have an analyst and critic as sympathetic as Alfred Stevens found in Comte Robert de Montesquiou, of whose slender figure and famous cane Whistler enjoyed making symphonies in color and choice lithographs. To attempt to add anything to what has been so happily written by that exquisite Frenchman, or to the more ambitious and scholarly work of Camille Lemonnier, may seem like threshing old straw. Stevens however has not yet enjoyed the vogue he deserves. He is still frequently confused with his English namesake who was the creator of the Wellington monument, and until recently no exhibition composed solely of his pictures had been held in England or America. Probably no such opportunity to see them will ever again be afforded, as the unique exhibition of his work at the École des Beaux-Arts, in 1900, to which the fashionable women of Paris flocked, eager to help honor the artist who for half a century had been their most delicate interpreter. The occasion itself was a distinction without a precedent for a living artist, and a source of keen



CONSOLATION
Painting by Alfred Stevens
Collection of Mr. Ernest W. Longfellow

delight to Stevens, then seventy-two years old. But it had a poignantly pathetic side. Four years before the exhibition, Stevens had published his "Impressions sur la Peinture," in which he said: "If one laments the premature death of a painter, one should also sometimes mourn for him who, for his art, lives to be too old."¹ The exhibition furnished conclusive evidence that the old master had, at that stage of his career, nothing new to say and that his powers had for years been on the wane.

He had begun by painting vagabonds, historical pictures, and military scenes, which were then in vogue, and he had even painted canvases with a moral tendency, preaching sermons powerful enough to effect reforms in army life. It was not long, however, before he joined in the reaction against the prevailing lifeless classicism, and he began to paint those masterly pictures of fashionable women of the Second Empire, which compare favorably with the best work of Terborch, and Metzu, and which entitle Stevens to rank as the supreme painter of *la mode* and of feminine grace. He painted men very rarely.

Fascinating widows consoling one another, sentimental wistful girls, careless flirts and tender adorable mothers, visiting, promenading, soliloquizing, day-dreaming, taking their morning bath, singing, arranging flowers, or delighting in

¹ The English quotations are from "Impressions on Painting," by Alfred Stevens, translated by Charlotte Adams (New York, 1886).

East Indian *objets d'art* — these women of Stevens are for the most part not conventionally handsome. “Je n’aime pas une femme que le capitaine des hussards, et tout le monde trouve belle,” he once said. “Pas de beauté sans distinction. Amenez-moi de jolies laides.” Was he not anticipating Manet? Style and elegance they possess to a degree, although Stevens clothed them in the fashion of their day, a costume till then regarded as artistically impossible. Work of the same genre by other artists — like the talented Constantin Guys, for instance, whom Baudelaire admired — seems *démodé* beside his. Helleu has caught some of his charm of contour and undulating grace, but the ennobling element of sumptuous color is missing in the etcher’s work.

Stevens believed in the importance of painters who depict their own eras and paint what they see. “The masters of the eighteenth century,” said he, “are especially interesting because they were thoroughly inspired by the manners of their epoch and interpreted them with spirit.” In accordance with that principle, he became an indefatigable observer of women in their infinitely varied attitudes. They were for Stevens an inexhaustible source of beauty, and he painted them with their odd turbans and their flower-like hoops, in pretty Oriental kimonos, rustling silks, or with lovely cashmere shawls, — “émaux cloisonnés de laines,” — marquise umbrellas, delicate fans, and other piquant accessories, paying discreet visits in drawing-rooms hung with cretonne or strange

wall-paper and furnished in the taste of his own day, with Japanese or Indian cabinets, wrought-iron tables, lacquers, Sèvres vases, old-fashioned carpets and pictures in tasseled frames. And how wonderfully he could paint such an environment!

Long before Whistler appeared on the scene, Stevens invented symphonies and harmonies in canary yellow, the sky's own blue, mother-of-pearl, and rose. In fact, the eccentric American, who was his contemporary and admirer, owed a great deal to him and, we may add, also to Albert Moore. The passion for Japonoiseries, started by Stevens and popularized by Braquemond and the de Goncourts, the phraseology of music which Whistler applied to his paintings, the subtle color schemes and clever juxtaposition of tones, were not original with the Butterfly, and it speaks volumes for the charm of Stevens's personality that Whistler, although rather jealous of the Belgian's genius, never became an enemy. The butterflies themselves frequently hover in harmonious pairs on Stevens's canvases and William Chase once told us that Stevens was the only painter praised by Whistler at the International Exhibition at Antwerp. Both men were great wits and masters of pithy epigram, and the "Ten O'Clock" belongs on a shelf with the "Impressions sur la Peinture," but Stevens was more genial than Whistler and less flippant. Their world was a gay one, and in Paris, where Stevens had a magnificent establishment, he was one of society's brightest ornaments.

Moreover, the fact that he, a Belgian, had fought for France, whereas Monticelli, a Frenchman, had avoided doing so, added to his popularity. The commanding figure of "Le Beau Sabreur" and his unquestioned rank as an artist made him welcome everywhere. He knew all the literary and artistic celebrities of his day, and the witnesses to his marriage were Delacroix and Dumas fils. His social and material success, however, did not in any way affect the conscientious care which he bestowed on every detail of his work. In fact, during the period of greatest financial prosperity a constantly growing power was noticeable. His pictures became less tight, his touch lighter, his color more luminous, his figures had greater refinement and distinction. His scintillating works seem, indeed, to have been painted with oils into which jewels were powdered. His style and perfection remind us of the art of Gustave Flaubert. He hated sensations and illegitimate artistic methods. "In a bovine exhibition," he wittily remarked, "be sure that the public will pause by preference before the five-footed ox." He was intensely modern in spirit and feeling, without being violent, either in his art or thought. A single seductive figure, a languid gesture, served to reveal his mastery, his solid, unexcelled technique. That the execution of a fine painting should be agreeable to the touch was one of his favorite aphorisms, and curious theories exist concerning the manner in which he secured such smoothness. *La belle pâte*, — the

charm of surface and brush-work, — was always a matter of serious concern with him. These things endear him to artists like Sargent and William Chase, who collected his canvases. He is distinctly a painter's painter, in spite of the fact that much of it is genre painting.

In his day Stevens was regarded as a conservative progressive. He had inherited wide sympathies and catholic tastes from his cultured mother and his father, an ex-calvary officer, who collected works of art and appreciated Delacroix. The whole family was artistic. One brother, Arthur, was a sound critic and curator of the late King Leopold's art gallery. Joseph, another brother, was an original and highly esteemed painter of animal life. Stevens's models were the little Dutch masters, and he insisted on a perfect technique, but he despised pictures which seemed laboriously painted. "Quentin Matsys," he said, "passed twenty years in executing his masterpiece at the Brussels Museum. Nevertheless, in contemplating this marvel one does not discern the least lassitude, the slightest exhaustion." His own manipulation of the brush was extremely brilliant, and his surfaces were at times as wonderful as Holbein's superb enamel. But Stevens's own ideal did not blind him to the talents of the younger progressive artists of his day. He defended Whistler's "Symphony in White." He introduced Manet to the dealers and encouraged Berthe Morisot, though he had misgivings about the ultimate success of their school, because some

indispensable qualities were lacking, — chiefly that impeccable technique which was his. Before his famous class of women, which included Sarah Bernhardt and her gifted sister Jeanne, he mildly ridiculed the Impressionists. Still, he much preferred their work to “la confiture de M. Bouguereau.” “Why have those persons,” he asked, “who imagine they invented impressionism nearly all the same impression before nature? It seems to me that the contrary should be the rule.” It is amusing to imagine what he would have said of the post-impressionistic deluge with which we were recently threatened.

Paul Lambotte draws an attractive portrait of Stevens as a teacher, “gaiant, spirituel, toujours beau cavalier, dans sa maturité soignée.” Like other critics who have written about him, Lambotte draws a veil over the last sad days, when the master was forced under distressing conditions to give up the old luxurious brilliant life and live close to nature. He then began to paint charming little marines, the merits of which are underestimated when contrasted with the pictures of his best period. They are simple, sincere, direct, exquisite in color. The finest ones remind us of the more subtle seascapes of Whistler, and they are not unlike some works of Boudin and Courbet, who painted Stevens’s portrait. We prefer however to always think of him as the painter of graceful pensive creatures in Japanese gowns or clouds of chiffon.

In addition to the pictures at the Metropoli-

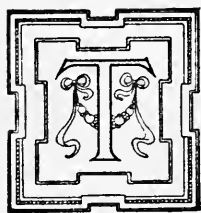


NOVELETTE
Oil Painting by Alfred Stevens
Collection of Mrs. William M. Chase

tan Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Worcester Museum and the Rhode Island School of Design, there are many admirable examples of Stevens's work in private American collections. Mrs. Pelouze's portrait of Madame Bernhardt as a youthful mother, with her boy at play in the cool shadows of a garden, embodies some of his best qualities. The unaffected grace and unusual refinement of the divine Sarah in her delicate rose tarletan, — the expressive hands, the hidden mystery of the deep wistful eyes, watching with glowing happiness and maternal solicitude her quaint little Maurice, chasing butterflies and oblivious to any sorrows in store for him, — this is indeed the creation of "*le savoureux chiromancien de la grace.*" Mr. Ernest W. Longfellow's magnificent panel "*Consolation,*" imbued with the tenderest feeling and replete with legitimate sentiment, is a variation of one of the painter's favorite themes. The fine examples in the Vanderbilt collection are familiar to visitors at the Metropolitan Museum. Mrs. William M. Chase's "*Novelette*" is another painted poem, characteristic of the artist whom Montesquiou called "*le sonnettiste de la peinture.*" The late Hugo Reisinger's "*On the Riviera*" is particularly interesting, because in composition and rhythm of line it shows traces of the strong Japanese influence. Mr. Stevenson Scott owns an agreeable panel of a young woman reclining in a meadow and there are many of the small marines scattered through American Collections.

Although the works enumerated are not Stevens's greatest, — these must be sought for in Belgium, — their allure is as strong as that of many of the best paintings of the little Dutch Masters, and we are fortunate to have such measures of his importance available on this side of the Atlantic. If our praise should seem excessive we can point to the Exposition de Portraits de Femmes (1870–1900) shown in 1907 in the Palais du Domaine de Bagatelle. Only two of Stevens's paintings were there shown but they established conclusively that in his chosen field he had no superior.

JOHN FLAXMAN



HE ostentatious Johnsonian biographies written at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, furnish us with the thread of a charming narrative of John Flaxman's childhood. We first come upon him as a pathetic little figure, sitting among the huge white plaster casts of antique sculpture which his father made at the Sign of the Golden Head, on New Street, Covent Garden. John Flaxman, senior, descended according to tradition from an old English family that fought at Naseby, worked for Roubiliac, Scheemakers and other artists and had opened the shop six months after he left the city of York, where his invalid boy was born on July 6, 1755. There was an elder son, William, but of him we learn next to nothing except that he too became a sculptor and woodcarver, and the boys were brought up by a stepmother who appears to have treated them very kindly. The moulds of the ancient masters were their playfellows, and such an environment naturally turned all their thoughts to sculpture. Visitors and customers,

as so often happens, were interested only in John, the precocious sick child, whom they invariably discovered modelling, copying medals, or poring over the classics. His future biographer, John Thomas Smith, the gossipy keeper of the prints and drawings in the British Museum, met and encouraged the boy when he was six years old. Romney, the distinguished painter, stroked his locks, evinced an interest in his future career, gave him sound artistic advice and offered to be useful to him in a pecuniary way. Then the Reverend Mr. Henry Mathew, of Percy Chapel, Charlotte Street, while under the spell of Winckelmann, came to order casts of Greek sculpture, and discovered the ill-shapen weakling on crutches, coughing and reading Latin, and taking impressions from seals. Soon afterwards, we hear that the rickety lad is translating Homer with Mrs. Mathew and is a centre of interest to the witty frequenters of her fashionable salon on Rathbone Place.

England was then enjoying the classical revival which Alexander Pope's rhymed translation of Homer had started, and Flaxman, sitting at the knees of his patroness, made drawings illustrating favourite passages in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and secured through her a first commission to execute some Homeric designs for a Mr. Crutchley of Sunninghill Park. Too weak to attend school, he managed with the aid of such friends to acquire the rudiments of a good education, and at the age of thirteen his model in clay won the first prize, a gold "pallett," offered by the Society of Arts,

a success which was repeated in the following year with a basso-relievo. Thereafter he was a frequent exhibitor at the Free Society of Artists in Pall Mall, and at the Royal Academy, which had awarded him a pupil's Silver Medal designed by Cipriani, "for a model of an Academy figure," in 1769. He was not studying with any particular master at the Academy schools, and when it came to a competition for the gold medal in 1772, Sir Joshua Reynolds bestowed it on a pupil who did nothing of importance in his later career to justify the president's choice. This reverse infuriated the rather conceited lad, but otherwise it had a salutary effect upon his character. The adulation of such distinguished women as Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Chapone, who came to Mrs. Mathew's reunions, was a dangerous experience for a feeble child. As he grew older, however, his health mended, his hobble disappeared and, although he was never fitted for games or violent forms of exercise, he developed a certain alert manner and ruggedness of character, without losing that winning, gentle manner which won everybody's liking and respect. At about this time he met Thomas Bentley, who recognized his talents and in turn introduced him to his partner, Josiah Wedgwood. When his father moved the shop to No. 420 on the Strand in the year 1775, we find young Flaxman working regularly for the famous English potter. William Blake, two years his junior, and Thomas Stothard were his bosom friends at the time, and

together they frequented the "most agreeable conversaziones" in the drawing-rooms of the virtuous Aspasia's whom we have already mentioned. In 1782 Flaxman married the admirable, if sententious Miss Anne Denman, and the famous prophecy of Sir Joshua, that Flaxman had ruined himself as an artist when he became a benedict, was among the few rebuffs which he ever suffered. "For a moment," writes the quaint and not altogether authoritative Allan Cunningham, "a cloud hung on Flaxman's brow, but this worthy couple understood each other too well to have their happiness seriously marred by the unguarded and peevish remark of a wealthy old bachelor." Mrs. Flaxman proved on the contrary to be an ideal helpmate and a devoted, inspiring companion. Her husband's modest income at the time was increased by working as a collector of the rates and they lived frugally at 27 Wardour Street. Around their simple hearth there gathered a few choice friends,— among others the wealthy squire and poet, Thomas Hayley, who was to become the biographer of Romney, and the patron of Blake. This rather maudlin writer's pretensions to connoisseurship were quite shallow, but he was a generous man and, having conceived a strong attachment for the Flaxmans, he invited them to spend their summers at Eartham, in Sussex, where Romney and Flaxman decorated certain rooms of his villa, and Blake was given boring commissions to make engravings for his patron's books. Wedgwood, who at first disliked Flaxman, also be-



In Iliad Homer's Iliad, Book 1, 177.

Paris

Book 1, 177. Iliad.

ILLIAD AND THE NERIDS
Drawing for Homer's Iliad by John Flaxman

friended him during these first years of married life, and in 1787 he advanced funds which enabled the couple to make an exhilarating pilgrimage to Italy, where Flaxman was to superintend the work of the potter's other modellers and draughtsmen. Wedgwood's opinion of his chief designer had materially altered, and there is a water-colour sketch of Flaxman by Jackson in the collection of Lord Leverhulme, accompanied by the following note, couched in terms of never-failing eighteenth-century courtesy: "Mr. Wedgwood presents his compliments to Mrs. Flaxman and has the honour to present her with the portrait of the first artist of the age, which, from her knowledge of his many other good qualities, he flatters himself will be favourably received."

The tour of the happy pair closed the first period of Flaxman's career. He was already recognized as a distinguished sculptor, but chiefly by reason of his connection with the great Staffordshire potter, for whom he continued working regardless of the current studio opinion that he was degrading his talent by working for a tradesman. His intuition for elegant movement, his incontestable charm and delicacy, were peculiarly suited to Wedgwood's needs, but it is probable that these minute finikin labours crippled his powers when he attempted heroic groups. Flaxman spent seven idyllic years with his wife in the Eternal City, and made his abode most appropriately on the Via Felice, but, instead of seeking the solitude which most young artists regard

as an essential condition for serious work, all strangers of distinction who passed through Rome from time to time were rather magnificently received by him. Naturally, the most profound study was no longer possible in the brilliant milieu which Flaxman thus created, but his work was nevertheless a great advance on the extravagances of Nollekens, Gibson, and other pseudo-classical rivals. His detractors claimed that he owed his popularity to his manner of living rather than to the quality of his work, but, in place of the popular mannerisms of the eighteenth century, he undoubtedly substituted a loftier, purer style, founded on the sound æsthetic principles which Winckelmann had rediscovered. He copied fine antiques like the Borghese vase, and his note-books and journals are filled with pregnant criticisms, and give ample evidence of his zealous interest not only in Greek art, but also in the Renaissance and the then despised Gothic. Many of his Roman groups were nobly conceived but their life waned when Flaxman's artisans began to finish them in marble. It was a point of scrupulous honour with him to complete his work on time and it was physically impossible to devote sufficient care and thought to each group, especially when some of these were colossal in size.

In two fields, however, Flaxman achieved lasting and notable successes. These were the memorial tombstones, — an art form favoured by Flaxman's Anglicanism, — and the marvelously

fine drawings. On the reliefs, he symbolised without triteness the homely Christian virtues and themes like sorrow, maternal tenderness, consolation or tranquil piety. Flaxman's embodiments bear testimony to his devotional tendency and combine classical feeling and genuine pathos in a rare degree. Though frequently slightly mannered, Canova, his generous rival and admirer, thought they excelled all other contemporary sculptures. Their clarity and purity remind one of the lyric compositions of Mendelssohn, and through such threnodies in stone, which fill the churches of England, and the amazingly beautiful drawings, may be traced Flaxman's lasting impression on English art. Had his manual dexterity and power of execution in marble equalled his pure sentiment and the nobility of his conceptions, as displayed in such original clay models as are preserved in the Flaxman Gallery of University College, Flaxman's renown as a sculptor would have been greatly enhanced.

While executing his marble sculptures, Flaxman turned as a relaxation to his childish amusement of illustrating. His most important series of designs are the thirty-nine drawings illustrating the *Iliad* and thirty-four for the *Odyssey*, commissioned by Mrs. Hare Naylor, about thirty-six drawings inspired by the tragedies of Æschylus made for the Dowager Countess Spencer, who paid a guinea apiece for them, and the drawings, illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy* executed for Thomas Hope. These facile, unpretentious

works are naturally of varying degrees of beauty, and frequently the artist not only interpreted a passage in two or three ways, but made important final changes while the approved drawing was being engraved. The plates soon achieved a world-wide success, became familiar to all students through the engravings of Piloni, Blake, and others, and were published almost simultaneously in England, France, and Germany. The Homer first appeared in 1791, the Æschylus in 1794 and the Dante in 1806, but all have been frequently reprinted. Thomas Piloni, an Italian, the most popular engraver of the time, did most of the work of interpretation. His name carried weight with the public and his plates were even shipped to England for publication, but the *Odyssey* plates were lost at sea, and William Blake, who hated the task, had to hastily make a new set of temporary engravings at five guineas each for the first English edition, to take their place. Blake's style was not as suave as the Italian's, but the fact is that all the engravers who intervened between the conceptions of the artist and his own expression, fell far short of the delightful originals, as may readily be seen by comparing the drawing and engraving of any particular design. Flaxman had a genuine flair for ringing the finest shades of sentiment out of the slightest Homeric episode and when we turn the pages of one of the engraved folios in the dim shadows of a library, our commonplaces disappear and we join the assemblies of the radiant

gods on Olympus, follow the fortunes of the glorious heroes of Troy, mingle with the graceful companions of Nausicaa, mourn with Achilles over the body of the youthful Patroclus or sail the perilous seas with crafty Ulysses. The pellucid beauty of the drawings is never meretricious. The lovely draperies with their slender folds, the subtly ordered combinations of figures, the economy of means employed, the Hellenic severity tempered by Flaxman's rare sweetness, — all these elements recall the highest periods of art, whereas the union of noble tenderness and dignified reticence exactly suited the temper of the sculptor's era. Amateurs were delighted with them, and it is to these drawings that the entire English school of sentimentalists, from Angelica Kauffmann downwards, may be traced. A fine spirituality seems to lurk about the works, and when they reached Romney he wrote quite soberly to their common friend Hayley: "I have seen the book of prints for the *Odyssey* by our dear and admirable artist Flaxman. They are simple, grand and pure; I may say with truth, very fine. They look as if they had been made in the age when Homer wrote." Later when the morose painter heard that Flaxman was returning from Rome, he again wrote to their patron: "Though he is not here in person, I have caught a portion of his soul from the beautiful images of his Homer and Dante. I am charmed with them; they have thrown a light upon my mind that has dissipated some of its thick gloom." The talented Fuseli,

who had charge of the Royal Academy collections, declared himself outdone, and Canova extolled them. Lord Byron, speaking of the Dante drawings, said that Flaxman's designs constituted the best translation of the Italian poet's work, and the ponderous philosopher Schlegel, chief among German critics of the time, also lauded the drawings in his most vehement Teutonic manner. In after years, when he was the artistic oracle of fashionable London, Flaxman assured his auditors that the most successful of his figures displayed in his illustrations of Homer, Æschylus and Dante were procured from innocent street vagrants and similarly natural and unsophisticated sources. The drawings are, indeed, instinct with inspiration and animation which only nature can give, but he carefully studied classic models as well. The designs have the inexhaustible gift of suggestion that the old vase drawings can boast of, but although he made their beauties his own, and his designs are archaeologically correct, they are never mere pastiches of Greek originals. He handles this antique world in a wonderfully penetrative way, as though he enjoyed some subtle affinity with Hellenism, and all the works are characterized by a serene vigour and placid elegance which easily justify their universal celebrity. Side by side with the Greek designs mentioned, his supple talent followed the various stages of the celestial voyage of Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, and there are three drawings for Cowper's translation of Milton's Latin poems



1. The horses are galloping to the right.
2. The driver in the foreground is holding the reins and a whip.

1892

LAMPITY COMPLAINING TO APOLLO
Drawing for Homer's Odyssey by John Flaxman

(1810), another light amusing set of ten for a Chinese tale, *The Casket* (1812), forty drawings for Sotheby's translation of *Oberon*, and thirty-six fine designs inspired by Hesiod, successfully engraved by William Blake in 1817. On October 2, 1796, his wife's birthday, he presented her with forty outline drawings. These illustrate a poem of his own entitled, *The Knight of the Blazing Cross*, and are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

We in America have at length a representative group of these delightful works, hitherto accessible to European students only. All are from the collection of Thomas Hope (1770-1831) for whom Flaxman made his marble group, "Cephalus and Aurora," and Benjamin West painted some of his classical pictures like the charming "Narcissus and Echo." Hope was a talented amateur, belonged to an enormously rich family of Dutch merchants and settled in England in 1796, when the French occupied Holland. After he had made extensive travels incident to his study of architecture, he spent his fortune encouraging contemporary art and collecting sculpture, Italian pictures, and antique vases. These he placed in his mansion at Deepdene near Dorking, in Surrey, and the house became a point of pilgrimage for classical students. His own talents as an architect were of no mean order, and besides his work on the "Costume of the Ancients" and contributions to the art of Interior Decoration, he was the anonymous author of "Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek, written at the close of

the eighteenth century," and published in 1819. This book enjoyed such a great vogue that Hope's bitter enemy Lord Byron, to whom it was attributed, confessed to the Countess of Blessington that he was moved to tears on reading it, for two reasons, — one that he had not written it, and the other that Hope had. Sydney Smith, too, was amazed that "the man of chairs and tables, the gentleman of sofas" could pen descriptions "not unworthy of Tacitus and not excelled by Byron." Hope's collections were recently scattered, and some of the choicest Greek vases, paintings, and drawings have found their way into our museums and private collections.¹

While the merits of the drawings of Flaxman were highly appreciated as soon as they made their appearance in weak engraved form, their unique importance and influence have not been adequately studied or commented upon. Meier-Graefe, one of the best of contemporary critics, seems to have felt their power, for he places them on a level beyond the reach of William Blake. "It is difficult to understand," he asserts, "why the strange nimbus that encircles Blake should have been conferred upon him rather than upon his compatriot Flaxman. Some of Flaxman's outline drawings illustrating Dante seem to me more valuable than all Blake's illustrations put together." On the other hand, it is true that

¹ The Art Institute of Chicago, which already possessed a famous collection of old Wedgwood, acquired a fine group of the drawings from the Hope collection.

Blake's vigorous genius undoubtedly affected Flaxman, who extolled the mystical drawings, claimed that they were equal to those of Michael Angelo, and added that "his poems are as grand as his pictures." When Cary, the translator of Dante, referred slightly to Blake's powers, Flaxman was deeply offended. Touched by the quality of his friend's poetical gifts, Flaxman began early to show his generous, kindly attitude by counselling the publication in 1783 of that excessively rare octavo volume, "*Poetical Sketches by W. B.*," and after joining with the Rev. Mr. Mathew in the expense, they presented the entire edition to the poet, to dispose of to his own advantage. Flaxman may also have introduced Blake to Wedgwood, for whom he engraved a show list of the potter's productions, and then he secured for him the patronage of Hayley. In 1800 Blake was persuaded to take up his residence with that writer in Sussex and to make engravings for his *Life of Cowper*. He was at first extravagant in recognition of his indebtedness, addressing a charming poem to Mrs. Flaxman, and repeatedly wrote letters to his "dear sculptor of Eternity," and "sublime archangel." A poem dated September 12, 1800, published in Sampson's fine variorum edition, is addressed:

"To my Dearest Friend John Flaxman These Lines:

I bless thee, O Father of Heaven and Earth!
that ever I saw Flaxman's face.

Angels stand round my spirit in Heaven, the blessed of Heaven are my friends upon Earth.

When Flaxman was taken to Italy, Fuseli was given to me for a Season.

And now Flaxman hath given me Hayley, his friend, to be mine — such my lot upon Earth.”

Secretly, however, he despised both Flaxman and his host Hayley, who was really sensitive to the originality of Blake’s talents, and in the famous Rossetti manuscript, owned by Mr. W. A. White of Brooklyn, are found many effusions like the following couplet:

“My title as a genius thus is proved —

Not praised by Hayley, nor by Flaxman loved.”

His strange nature forgot every kindness. It galled him to observe careers like Flaxman’s, the success and harmony of which nothing seemed ever to mar. Nor could his wild spirit brook Hayley’s conventional banalities and, after a residence of three years at Eartham, he broke off all relations with the writer rather than offer his genius to serve such offices. An account of the social relations of these three men would make a fascinating study of the artistic temperament, but we are immediately concerned only with the very real artistic debt which Flaxman and Blake owed one another. Blake in the Rossetti manuscript wrote: “Flaxman cannot deny that one of the very first monuments he did I gratuitously designed for him, and at the same time he was

blasting my character to Macklin, my employer, as Macklin told me at the time. How much of his Homer and Dante he will allow to be mine I do not know, as he went far enough off to publish them, even to Italy, but the public will know." Students will recall that Linnell, who in 1818 became Blake's chief friend and disciple, commissioned the artist to execute a set of designs for Dante, and that work on these was begun about the year 1821, more than fifteen years after Flaxman's designs had become familiar to the public. Even laying aside such evidence however, we have only to compare the earlier and cruder, if more powerful drawings of Blake, with those made after he had engraved some of Flaxman's designs to recognize his debt to the sculptor. Flaxman's rather soothing influence may not always have been for the better, but Blake could not have missed the monumental symmetry, the gem-like purity and simplicity of his friend's drawings. Flaxman was an exponent of mild rapture and innocence and only rarely of horror or passion. He seized upon the homely domestic virtues, the joys of kinship or the pain of loss, and expressed these in large abstract forms with the greatest variety and ever-increasing profundity, making the beauty of the gestures permanent and universal in appeal. Romney, as we have seen, succumbed to their charms and Lawrence's Homeric drawings, now scattered through American collections, show that he too had familiarized himself with their staid and

quiet loveliness. His strength did not lie in the field of violent emotion, and his giants, demons and furies, as compared with Blake's, are gently reassuring in spite of their fearsome visages. An unique sentiment, using the word in the finest sense, was the mainspring of his fertile art. His science, taste, and thorough training made him a master of the human form treated abstractly, but he had the defects of his good qualities, and only the captious critic will contrast his spontaneous flow of invention, superb technical beauty, infinite grace, clarity, and harmony, with Blake's childish extravagant genius, mysticism, unpolished directness and his tremendous conceptions. Flaxman's drawings place him on a level with the most consummate draughtsmen of all times, whereas Blake's unparalleled imagination was in rebellion against and crippled his technical power.

We have noted that in Germany the praise of Schlegel coupled with the interest aroused by Winckelmann in matters Hellenistic made Flaxman immensely popular, and the influence which his drawings exerted on Continental art is clearly traceable. In France, although the art of England was at that time despised, Flaxman was described as the "*merveilleux évocateur des chants homériques*," but the debt of that country to Flaxman has only recently begun to be recognized. When Flaxman went to Paris with Benjamin West in 1802 after the peace of Amiens, to view Napoleon's precious spoils, he stiffly

declined any interchange of civilities and courtesies with the French artists, who in Flaxman's opinion were instrumental and responsible for the ransacking of Italy. Religion was a living principle with him, influencing not only his life but his work. "The Reverend John Flaxman" he was jestingly called by the obstreperous Fuseli, and the epithet was a happy one, for Flaxman, like a rigid Puritan, held immorality in absolute horror, and would never excuse or condone it on the ground of the brilliance or cleverness of the artistic sinner. Just as his Bacchanales were not religious frenzies but merely patriarchal ceremonies, psalms and hymns in stone, so his political conduct was maintained consistently with moral principles which compelled him to refuse to meet the Emperor or his official painter, David, whom he had condemned in an open letter dated 1797. All regicides and atheists were avoided and the palm of beauty was awarded to the incomparable Ingres. It was probably on the strength of Flaxman's influential expression of opinion that Ingres won the Grand Prize of Rome with his *Achilles and the Ambassadors of Agamemnon*, and Ingres in turn paid Flaxman a compliment by giving him a prominent position in the famous *Homage to Homer*, begun in the year of Flaxman's death. The greatest of French draughtsmen possessed an original drawing by the English master, depicting the bound Prometheus visited by the Oceanides, and this was treasured along with the sketches of Raphael and the manuscripts of Mo-

zart and Gluck. In his note-books, preserved in the museum at Montauban, the great Frenchman repeatedly refers with intense interest and admiration to Flaxman, and he unquestionably borrowed the Jupiter of Flaxman's *Iliad* when he painted the *Homage to Homer*, in which the English sculptor may be seen standing beside Mme. Dacier to the right of the enthroned blind poet. Both artists became as it were mediators between the realism of modern times and the formal austere idealism of the ancients. Through Ingres, the influence of Flaxman extended to Flandrin, Chasserieu and to Ary Scheffer, who must have known the Dante drawing *La bocca mi baccio tutto tremanti* when he painted his *Paolo and Francesca*. Furthermore it is a curious fact that Ingres, as well as Flaxman, owes his immortality partly to occasional drawings, executed for slight remuneration.

When in 1794 the Flaxmans returned to London from Rome, with a collection of casts for Romney, they took commodious quarters in Buckingham Street, Fitzroy Square, where the household included his sister-in-law, Maria Denman, and his half-sister, Mary Ann Flaxman, thirteen years his junior and herself favourably known as an artist. Their life was very happy and in his famous diary, Henry Crabbe Robinson gives charming vignettes of the pleasant spirit which reigned there. He always saw the New Year in at their home, which boasted the society of the Hayleys, Samuel Rogers, Stothard, Sir Thomas

Lawrence and Romney. In 1795, the last year of his activity, Romney painted the original of the well-known picture in the National Portrait Gallery, showing the sculptor at work on the bust of Hayley, with the latter's son in the background. It became the subject of an unfortunate and unseemly wrangle between Hayley and Romney's son, and was finally put into the possession of Thomas Greene, who was Romney's solicitor. Lawrence has also left fine souvenirs of his visits in the shape of two beautiful portrait drawings of Flaxman and his wife, whom he highly esteemed. There is, indeed, not a single dissenting voice in the chorus which all the commentators of the period sing in Flaxman's praise, for the elevation of thought which characterized him as an artist marked him as a man. Even the suspicious Romney loved and admired him, and Crabbe Robinson takes pleasure in amplifying all the contemporary descriptions of his "good-humoured, even frolicsome, kindhearted" friend.

Signal honours, dignities, and important commissions came thick and fast after his return from Italy, where he was made a member of the Ancient Academy of St. Luke's. During his absence, Sir Joshua had died and, by the irony of fate, his reproved sculptor was now deemed the most worthy to execute the statue in his honour which now stands under the dome of St. Paul's. In 1797 he became an Associate of the English Royal Academy, and in 1800, on presenting it with his *Apollo and Marpessa* — fine in concep-

tion but as usual weak in execution — he was made a full Academician. In 1810 a chair of sculpture was created for him and in connection with this office he delivered the ten lectures which have come down to us. An entry in sensible Crabbe Robinson's diary on February 18th, 1811, reads as follows: "At the Royal Academy. Heard Flaxman's introductory lecture on Sculpture. It was for the most part, or entirely, historical. He endeavoured to show that in all times English sculptors have excelled when not prevented by extraneous circumstances. This gave great pleasure to a British audience. In one or two instances, the lecture was applauded in a way that he would be ashamed of. — — — He spoke like an artist who loved and honoured his art, but without any personal feeling. He had all the unpretending simplicity of a truly great man. His unimposing figure received consequence from the animation of his countenance; and his voice, though feeble, was so judiciously managed and so clear, and his enunciation was so distinct, that he was audible to a large number of people." As printed, the lectures make dull reading, for Flaxman was not an artist in words, but his admiration for primitive Greek, Gothic, and Egyptian art prove that his taste and judgment were far in advance of his time. He contributed various anonymous articles to the old encyclopædia of Rees and he was one of the experts called to pass upon the wisdom of the acquisition of the Elgin marbles by the English nation. His professorial

and social activities did not, however, diminish his ardour for work, and he was busy with a vast number of monuments. Almost one hundred of his works are listed in the catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibitions alone and how many more abound in the cathedrals of England, no one has as yet taken the trouble to tell. It is small wonder that in these he so often failed to preserve to the end of his labours the force of his original inspiration and impulse, as he did in the drawings.

Toward the end of his career, Flaxman became interested in applied art. In 1817 he designed a charming classical tripod, presented to the actor John Kemble, and he began the still more important *Shield of Achilles* for the eminent silversmiths, Rundell & Bridge. For this singularly involved and very skillful ring-shaped composition, inspired by the celebrated eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, he received £620, and replicas in silver were made for George IV and other distinguished personages. A plaster copy about three feet in diameter was in the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who led contemporary criticism by praising it extravagantly as unsurpassed even by Michael Angelo,—“a divine work; unequalled in its combination of beauty, variety and grandeur.”

Flaxman's career suffered a fatal blow when his wife died, after several strokes, on February 6, 1820. He had always been interested in Swedenborgianism and he now became more mystical and melancholy. He had been intimate

with Blake for many years, and we learn with no great surprise that Sharp, the engraver, also a spiritualist, invited Flaxman to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem and become their chief architect to rebuild the Temple. While nothing came of this, he withdrew more and more from society and devoted himself to his work. In 1822 he addressed the Royal Academy on the occasion of the death of his Italian admirer, Canova, and in the following year, when he was finishing his *Cupid, Psyche, Raphael, Michael Angelo* and other figures, his tasks were pleasantly interrupted by a visit from Schlegel. He had finished the exterior decorations for Covent Garden and was at work on designs for Buckingham Palace when he became ill. Allan Cunningham gives us a curious account of his last days. It appears that an admirer arrived at the sculptor's studio with an Italian book. "Sir," said the visitor, "it was so generally believed throughout Italy that you were dead, that my friend, the author, determined to show the world how much he esteemed your genius, and having this book ready for publication, he has inscribed it '*Al Ombra di Flaxman.*'" Flaxman smiled, and accepted the volume with unaffected modesty. This occurred on Saturday, the 2nd of December, when he was well and cheerful. The next day he was taken suddenly ill with cold, and the 7th (1826) he was dead. He was buried in the burial ground of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, near the old St. Pancras Church, accompanied by the President and Coun-

cil of the Royal Academy, which exhibited his statue of John Kemble in the following year.

The entire nation mourned him and shortly afterwards Sir Thomas Lawrence delivered a eulogy on his deceased friend to the students of the Academy. This estimate of Sir Thomas, though obviously friendly, contains some subtle criticism. To us, the drawings which are now universally recognized to be his most important works have a special contemporary significance. They afford a kind of standard by which any artist might take the measure of his graphic ability. The power of Van Gogh, the theoretical importance of Picasso, and the dignified failures of many post-impressionists have temporarily blinded us to obvious beauty. We need something to liberate us from the tyranny of our more or less ugly mode in art, and these superb drawings, incisive, suave, tender or voluptuous, vigorous and yet serene, aerial in their delicacy, quiet in their loveliness and elegant in execution, like the playing of Heifetz and Casals, or the singing of Galli-Curci, will again exercise their imperishable influence and help to carry us back to a time when the highest form of civilized life was a manifestation of noble beauty.

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